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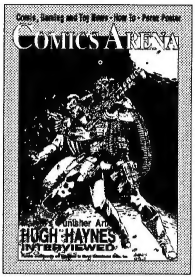
Arena Magazine

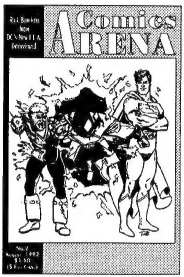
No.6 - January, 1993 - $3.50 ($4.50 Can.)

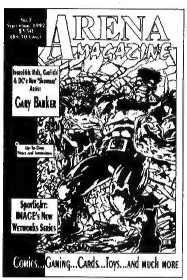
DC's COMIC ARTIST

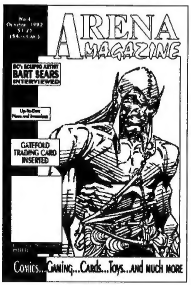
VAL SEMEIKS INTERVIEWED

Comics...Gaming...Cards...News...and much more









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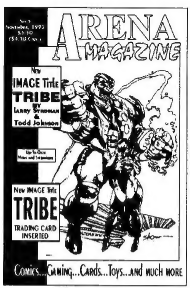

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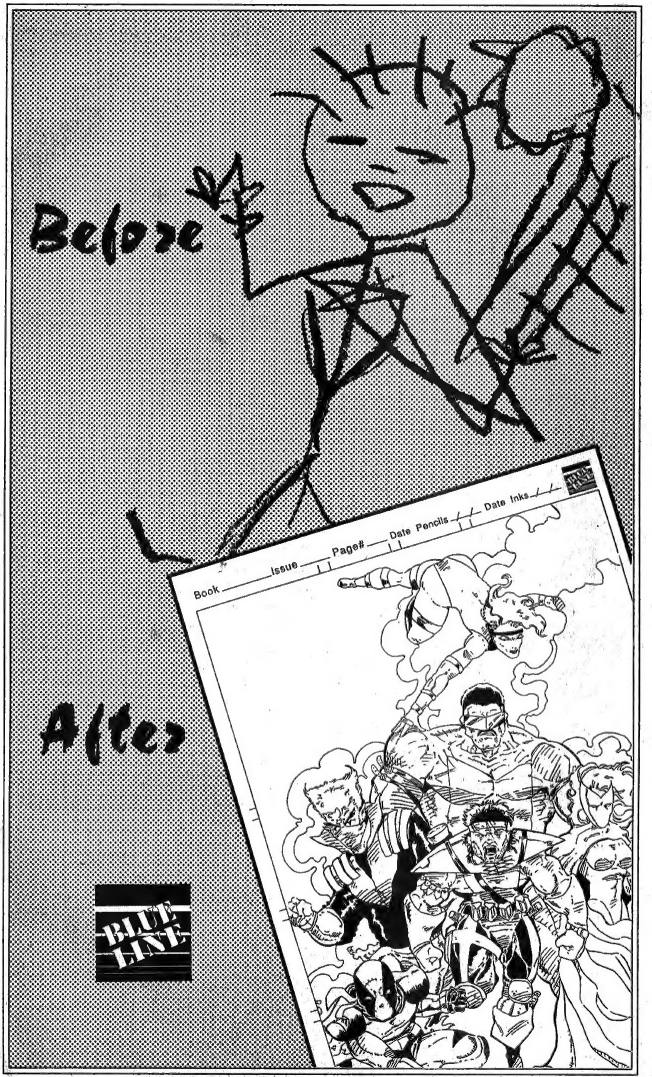
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ABOUT THE COVER...

Val Semeiks pencils a Lobo/ Demon cover which was adeptly inked by our very own publisher, Bob Hickey! Colored by our very own Allen Freeman!

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Editorial

Y'know, I'd like to say that some guys got no couth. I'm talkin', what's up with folks trying to knit-pick their measly way through today's society with no regards for the other individual? Okay, I'm being a little severe but I had to get your attention.

What I'm really talking about are fans. We're starting to get a lot of letters now, and for the utmost major-point, these are intelligent, ego-stroking letters submitted by obviously learned and well-read patrons. However, we do come across the occasional crayon markings scrawled unintelligibly on paper towels and shoved unwillingly in a crinkled envelope or neatly-typed examples of over-education and too-much-time on one's hands. We love letters. We welcome criticism. But, truth be told, we haven't received one bad letter about content! Are we perfect? Let us know how we bug you. If not, keep telling us how great we are.

BUT, what I'm getting at here (in a roundabout way) are *mistakes*. Some people have to understand that yes, we are human. We make mistakes. We learn from mistakes and move on. It's a simple breech of etiquette, if not a smack in the face, if the only negative letters we've received happen to be criticisms of grammar, typos and punctuation! That, to me, is a waste of time.

If I may be so bold, here's an extension of that thought. Fans who come to conventions with whole boxes of books for creators to sign. Whole boxes?! Get real. Be it John Byrne or Jim Lee or whomever, it's a punch in the tender place when a sniveling, snot-nosed fan-boy slams 116 comics in his face to autograph. What can they be thinking? Not about the artists, that's for sure. About themselves? Most definitely. It's just a question of *respect*. If you like a person's work, respect the person and treat them the way you'd like to be treated if you were them. It's that easy. Maybe the next time we're all at a convention, we should check our self-absorption at the door.

Until next time... be empathic and be swell.

Joe out.

JOE MARTIN

One thing I'd like to add. If you read last issue's article, *Role Playing Principles*, by yours truly, I'd like to formally apologize about associating the "lisp" crack with "other annoying fashion." I was attempting to paint a mental picture, but I understand that a lisp is a deficiency. Many good, intelligent people are stricken with this defect yet function perfectly in normal, everyday society and to that end, I'm sorry if I have offended anyone. Thanks.

Thrown To The Lions!

To: *Arena Magazine*

I'm writing to say I really enjoyed issue #4. I agree with Jerry's Top Ten. Like him, I hope *Grimjack* is revived and I'd love to see *Sable* brought back but only with Mike Grell working on the book. I found the Industry News very informative and to me it seems better than CBG's. I was very pleased by the interview with Bart Sears and I'm looking forward to the Lurene Haines' articles. Since this was the first issue I've been able to get my hands on, I was wondering if you had back issues for sale?

As to the name of the letter's page contest, my first choice would be "Thrown to the Lions." A couple of alternate choices would be "Fan Forum" or "Letter Forum".

Keep up the good work.

Tim Hewing
Phila., IL

Hey, thanks! As you know, Bart has already left DC and headed Valiant's way! His new work on ***Turok*** *and* ***X-O Man O' War*** *looks phenomenal! Bart is very underrated but I'm certain we'll all quickly find that this work will be his best ever!*

For back issue information, Tim, check out the inside cover.

Dear *Arena Magazine*,

As I was browsing through the shelves of my local comic book store, I noticed a few copies of *Arena Magazine #4* left on the rack. I had never bought *Arena* before, but I noticed this issue had an interview with Dale Keown concerning his upcoming *Pitt* series for Image, so I eagerly bought it. I can honestly say it was more than worth it. Hank Kanalz did a brilliant job of interviewing Keown, and the pin-up was really nice. After reading all of the other interviews and columns, I noticed an ad for the next issue of *Arena*, with a Larry Stroman cover featuring *Tribe* for Image Comics. I thought, "How in the world did *Arena* get the scoop on *Tribe* before anyone else?" Afterwaiting patiently for a couple of weeks, issue #5 came in, and the first thing I read was the *Tribe* interview. Once again, I was impressed. Not only with that, but the entire book itself. I read it from cover-to-cover and really enjoyed the "C'mon Play Serious" one-shot. I used to role-play when I lived in Japan, and I knew a few kids who played exactly like that kid wearing the Superman garb featured in the mag.

All in all, *Arena* is a great magazine with terrific writers and a great format. I'm going to send a couple issues to my pals living in Japan, even though most of them subscribe to *Wizard*. As far as titles for the letter column, how about "Get In the Ring"? Anyway, good luck, and I'm looking forward to issue #6.

Brian Maloney
Beaver Falls, PA

Alright, well it looks like we're doing a pretty good job. People seem happy with Arena, so far. So, if you really, really like us, do what Brian's doing - TELL EVERYBODY! Tell your friends, your neighbors, your grandparents, your pets... let 'em look through your copy but make 'em buy their own! Oh, and definitely make sure to tell your retailer!

And, Brian, if you like Image, you'll love ***Arena Magazine #8!*** *Al Gordon and Jerry Ordway talk about* ***WildStar*** *and you can get your hands on the new* ***1993 Image Postcards!*** *One of three will be randomly inserted in that very issue!*

Dear *Arena*:

I just picked up issue #5. I'm a big fan of Larry Stroman's work and it was nice to see a cover by Mr. Stroman showcasing his new characters for his new Image title. The news section has really got great information on what's up-and-coming in comics and it seems to have gotten longer, which is great.

The Stroman/ Johnson interview was good and gave readers an in-depth look into their new title (*Tribe*) from Image. The UKCAC '92 article was an interesting synopsis of the con. On page 46, there is a picture and it says Jon Bogdanove's name on the bottom of the picture. This picture looks like Joe Quesada instead of Mr. Bogdanove.

My favorite column is "Getting Into The Business" by Lurene Haines. She had some really interesting things to say about the comics biz. I'd really like to see maybe an editor write a guest column about how to get into comics as a comic book editor. I have 3 suggestions of people I'd like to write this column. They are as follows: Archie Goodwin, Mike Gold, or Michael Eury.

One thing that's really great about this magazine is the flip side which focuses on gaming and trading cards. I really like this idea. Keep up the excellent work.

Peter Fisico
Richmond Hill,
Ontario

Great suggestions, Peter, and thanks for pointing out the little photo discrepancy. Sorry, Joe! We're working on guest columnists all the time! How does a guest letter sound? Read on!

Dear Joe:

Thank you for sending me copies of *Arena*. I think it's an excellent addition to the impoverished field of magazines about comics. Naturally, I was gratified to see that Jerry Smith considers *Nexus* the best comic book of all time. The balance of articles was very good... liked the interviews... many news bits I haven't seen elsewhere. I thought Lurene's article on getting into the biz was very refreshing and I look forward to more!

Best,

Mike Baron

It seems that even the pros like us. With a name like Mike Baron enjoying your magazine, how can you go wrong...? Wait! Maybe, I spoke too soon!

Dear Mr. Hickey:

I just recently came across your magazine and was hopeful that I finally discovered a publication that could fill the void left by the cancellation of *Amazing Heroes*, At first glance, it seemed as you were that mag, unfortunately, after reading the issue in question (#4) I feel that while your publication shows promise, it falls far short of the mark.

I was hopeful because you seem not to cater to the fanboy/investor crowd that *Wizard* is courting, but it seems that you folks need to invest in a style manual and bone up on some of your basic grammar skills before you can make a serious bid for AH's old crown of the premier comic mag. Since Jerry Smith made such an eloquent statement for honest opinion, and you are soliciting for letters, I though I'd oblige with the following.

1) Your layout is both serviceable and readable, if rather pedestrian. What is the purpose of the black boxes on pages 13 and 59? Did somebody die? Was some art supposed to be there and didn't print or what? It looks awful couldn't you find a spot illo or house ad to run in these places?

2) Titles of movies, comics, games, TV shows, etc.: Are they supposed to be bold or italics? You've got them written both ways (on page 53 you have them both ways on the same page). Make up your minds guys, and stick with it. It should be one way or the other, not both, as that is not only unprofessional, but confusing to the reader.

3) Your Address: U.S. Postal Codes are always cap, thus your address is Florence, KY, not Florence, Ky as indicated in your indicia. (If you were using the old abbreviation of Kentucky it would be Upper and lowercase letters - - Ken., I believe.) This is not knit-picking, but simply the right way of writing your own postal code.

4) Typos, homonyms: (This knit-picking to a degree.) On page 43 (column 2 paragraph 2), Jerry says "...wisecracking about their being eunuches." I believe that he was attempting to say "...wisecracking about **there** being eunuches." Not only does this make the sentence mean something entirely different, but it also causes the sentence to actually make sense. Then on page 50 in the story about the death of Superman, you say "That could mean stroied and sound bites..."? Don't you mean "...stories and sound bites..."? Got to watch that stuff. Typos are (almost) understandable (but shouldn't happen with spell-checkers), but using **their** instead of **there** is inexcusable.

5) '50s, '60s, '70s, etc.: I'll never understand why, but many people (like those at your mag), insist on writing these as 50's, 60's, 70's. This is categorically wrong! I say this because these words are neither possessive, conjunctions, or words with missing letters, they are plural words. This would be obvious if you were to write the word out with letters, rather than numbers and letters (fifties, nineties, not fiftie's, ninetie's). Again, I am not knit-picking, merely utilizing correct grammar. Something you should be doing.

6) Spider-Man: Who is this Spiderman you kept writing about in the 2099 article? I never heard of him, nor the comic Spiderman 2099. I have heard of Spider-Man and *Spider-Man 2099* (that's capital "S" - spider **hyphen** capital "M" -man). Look it up guys, the hyphen is part of his name and has been for the past 30 years (Stan inserted it specifically so it wouldn't look like Superman.) No one ever puts a hyphen in Superman, or makes Iron Man one word, so why do people keep forgetting to put the hyphen in Spidey's name? I can sort of buy it when it happened in the "regular" press, but you should be embarassed that you did it.

Hopefully, when you guys

Thrown To The Lions!

correct these not-so-minor errors in your publication, you'll be able to fill the very big shoes left vacant by AH's absence. Thanks for hearing me out.

Sincerely,
Scott Kincaid
Norwalk, CT

Jerry Smith's reply:

Arena does appreciate all feedback and criticism, positive or negative. It's letters of snobbish nitpicking we could live without. However, you did take the time to write and you have some valid points.

1) Nobody died, sorry. The printers are known, on occasion, to misplace artwork and in a timely publication such as Arena Magazine, we had no choice but to go on. The error was not found until the actual press day. Our sincerest apologies for how extremely awful it must have been for you, Scott, we had no choice, however, but to print black boxes.

2) A valid criticism, Scott, and one that is being corrected as I write these words. A word of advice though; when making a criticism or pointing out a mistake, it is wise to make your point and move on, not belabor the fact and point out what unprofessional idiots the people involved are. It doesn't really accomplish anything except to give the impression that one is an overeducated boor.

3) It is a little known postal regulation that in months with a full moon, midwestern atates are required to abbreviate their state names with one capital letter and one lower case letter, thus "Ky." This was recently repealed (after Arena #4), and from now on you will see the new regulation "KY" on all of our correspondence. We is smart enuff to knows our owns Postal Codes, affa all! We did however, admire all of your Postal Code knowledge.

4) On your point about Jerry Smith not knowing the difference between "their" and "there", you are just plain wrong. The sentence in question was, "In his search for the magic harlot, (Lobo) has time to behead one guard and blow away another while wisecracking about their being eunuches, and put an entire planet full of harem-girls to sleep with knock-out darts". The subject of the sentence is "guard(s)", and "their" is the correct possessive to use when referring to said guards. "There", while not only incorrect grammar, doesn't "cause the sentence to actually make sense", as you claim. It prohibits it from doing so. The sentence makes perfect sense as it is. Thanks anyway for trying to tell the writer what he "meant" to say.

5) Once again, you're using a bloody battle-axe when a pen knife would do. Point taken and understood.

6) Spider-Man's name has been misspelled at one time or another in every publication that has ever featured the character. It's true we have less of an excuse beacuse our magazine is aimed at a comic reading audience, but mistakes happen.

*No, Scott, we are not **Amazing Heroes**, nor are we trying to be. We're just a dedicated bunch of guys who love what we do, trying to publish the best comics & gaming magazine we can. Sure we're still learning and making mistakes as we go. But we learn and improve with every mistake we make. Hopefully soon you won't care that we aren't **Amazing Heroes**, we'll be giving you such a value for your money in **Arena Magazine** that you won't care.*

Thanks for answering our call for feedback. However, your letter would have been more effective if you had filled it with creative criticism rather than contempt. We are all impressed with how much you know.

CONTRIBUTOR'S INFORMATION

Writing: Address all submissions to Arena Magazine, 264 Main Street, Florence, Kentucky, 41042. Please enclose a S.A.S.E. Submissions must be typed, double spaced. Keep a copy of your manuscript. Only send copies. Always put your name, complete address, and phone number on each page of article.

Art: Address all submissions to Arena Magazine, 264 Main Street, Florence, Kentucky, 41042. Send good copies of stats please. Put your name and address on the back of each piece of art. Always include an S.A.S.E. if you wish your materials returned.

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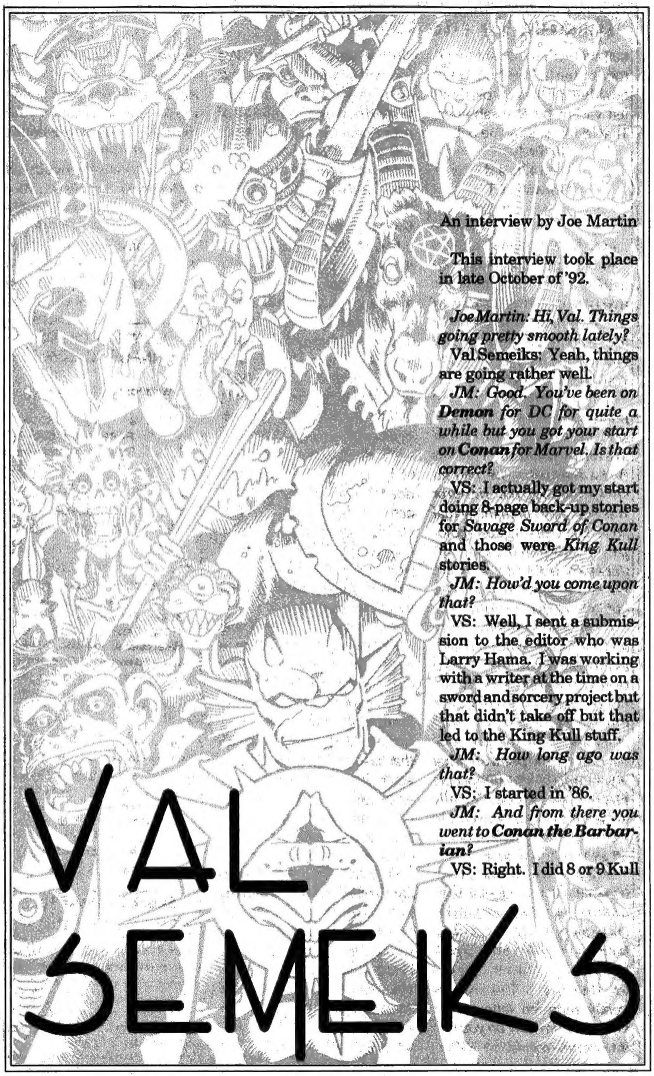


VAL SEMEIKS

An interview by Joe Martin

This interview took place in late October of '92.

Joe Martin: Hi, Val. Things going pretty smooth lately?

Val Semeiks: Yeah, things are going rather well.

JM: Good. You've been on ***Demon*** *for DC for quite a while but you got your start on* ***Conan*** *for Marvel. Is that correct?*

VS: I actually got my start doing 8-page back-up stories for *Savage Sword of Conan* and those were *King Kull* stories.

JM: How'd you come upon that?

VS: Well, I sent a submission to the editor who was Larry Hama. I was working with a writer at the time on a sword and sorcery project but that didn't take off but that led to the King Kull stuff.

JM: How long ago was that?

VS: I started in '86.

JM: And from there you went to ***Conan the Barbarian?***

VS: Right. I did 8 or 9 Kull

stories and then Buscema left the Conan book and they offered it to me.

JM: What was your stint on that?

VS: I did 29 issues.

JM: I didn't realize you did that many!

VS: Most people don't. But, uh, I liked sword and sorcery ever since I was a little kid. I was a fan of Robert E. Howard's work. A lot more so than what was being done in the comic book. I was very happy to get to work on *Conan*.

JM: And a fun change for fans, too, I believe.

VS: Thanks. I hope so. The problem was that it sold right around where I would start making royalties or barely making them but I never did make much money on *Conan*. I really never liked the printing process it was under, either. I never liked my coloring and I wasn't very happy with inking and that kind of stuff.

JM: The bright, flexographic process was just getting underway.

VS: Yeah, and Marvel's got that stuff under control now but back then it was just garish. I would always draw the book hoping it would come out like the Hal Foster stuff on *Prince Valiant* but it would never quite get there.

JM: Any art background other than comics?

VS: I worked in advertising for 8 years before breaking into the comic market. I was a freelance artist and then I was an art director. I didn't go to school for art. People who like to draw have been drawing ever since they were little kids.

JM: Speaking of being a kid, what's your memory of comics?

VS: Well, I grew up with just the DC and Marvel stuff. I used to like *Green Lantern*, *Sgt. Rock*, the Haunted War Stories stuff, *Fantastic Four*... all the Kirby stuff.

JM: Okay. Was Kirby a prominent influence?

VS: He was a major influence to me. I have three major influences. There was Kirby, of course, Hal Foster and there was the Warner Bros. cartoons. I do like Moebius a lot, too.

JM: Interesting. Warner Bros., eh?

VS: Yeah, early Daffy Duck and Yosemite Sam... I consider that a major influence on my storytelling.

*JM: I think much of your **Conan** was reminiscent of Hal Foster, though, in terms of shading and panel layout within the panels.*

VS: I think Foster's biggest strength was in his scenery work and I always try to put that in there. Sometimes it wouldn't get inked properly and it wasn't colored right. I think backgrounds are very important. It's extremely important to set the scene. I try to make it unique and different. It's something I look for in my scripts.

*JM: Cool. So, how many issues of **Demon** have you done so far?*

VS: I've done 28 altogether. I've finished my run on the *Demon*. *Demon #29* will be my last issue and *#30* will have a new art team. I'll still do covers for a while.

JM: So now that it's behind you, what's your favorite issue?

VS: I liked the Lobo issues a lot. They were fun. I also like *#19*, Etrigan's origin issue, a great deal.

*JM: Is the Val Semeiks' **Demon** era over then?*

VS: I doubt that I'll ever go back to the Demon. I can tell you, however, that Lobo will be in the Demon again. We had planned a Demon/ Lobo miniseries but that storyline will instead be incorporated in the pages of the *Demon* although I won't be drawing it.

JM: It's great when those two characters get together.

VS: They are a good match-up! Alan Grant is unpredictable when it comes to these guys. It's a lot of fun and comics ought to be fun.

JM: Absolutely. What's any upcoming projects now?

VS: I'm doing a Lobo special that should be out towards the end of the year.

JM: Strictly Lobo?

VS: Strictly Lobo. A one-shot written by Alan Grant, inked by John Dell. It's looking real good. The name of the story is "Portrait of a Victim" and it's a victim's recounting of his encounter with Lobo. It's being inked right now.

JM: You must've really cranked that out. How was your collaboration with Alan Grant on that project?

VS: He wrote most of the *Demon* material. I like Alan's writing a lot. He keeps humor, and keeps the story moving with a certain outrageousness to it. I enjoy working with him very much.

JM: What's your feelings on Lobo as a character?

VAL —
IF YOU GET THIS COVER BACK, I'D LIKE TO BUY IT FOR MY OWN COLLECTION DON'T ONE YET!
—KARL—
EDITOR: RASPLER
ARTIST: SEMEIKS
INKER: KESEL
Interview
COVER TITLE DEMON MONTH
NO. IDENTIFICATION

VS: I enjoy Lobo a lot. He's a fun character and reminds me, in several ways, of Conan. He's very barbaric, a barbarian in a future setting, and there's many similarities even in drawing the two.

I like the way the inking is coming out on this story, by the way. John Dell is a very good inker.

JM: Is this his first inks on your pencils?

VS: Uh, he inked the last handful of pages from issue #28 or #29 of the *Demon*. I think it was #29.

By the way, I'm going to be doing more Lobo work.

JM: Anything you can tell about?

VS: I can't say specifically but stuff is coming.

JM: Okay, so tell me your dream project.

VS: Dream project? Well, the other project I'm working on is a dinosaur story and I think just about any artist has always wanted to draw dinosaurs. This is an entirely new project from DC. It's called *Captain Stone and the Dinosaurs* and it will be a 60-page graphic format, I guess. The format hasn't exactly been settled but that's what I'm working on right now.

JM: Tell me more.

VS: Hmmm. Well, it's a time-travel story and we plan on having lots and lots of dinosaurs! It's going to be very authentic, very accurate with a modern thinking on how we show the dinosaurs and their habits and behavior and things. Charles Santino is the writer I'm working with.

JM: That's an unfamiliar name to me.

VS: He put together the *Aesop's Fable* for, uh, Dark Horse, I think. It may be Fantagraphics. He's done assorted projects. He did some *Conan* material with me.

JM: So are dinosaurs the main focus of the story, actually?

VS: There's a story that goes with it, of course. It's an out-of-control time travel story, a mystery, they're jumping around to a lot of different eras so we can show lots of different dinosaurs with an exciting storyline to tie it all together. It's a mix of science fiction with dinosaurs.

JM: And a brand new cast of characters?

VS: Yeah. I'm really looking forward to it. Drawing dinosaurs and even the setting, the background, is going to be fun.

JM: What's a typical day in the studio for you?

VS: Typically, I wake up and draw until I fall asleep (laughs). Seriously, I do work a normal day, 8 hours at least.

JM: How many pages?

VS: A page or two a day. The closer a deadline gets, the faster I'll go. I'm not real fast. I'm adequately fast.

JM: Easily a full time job.

VS: Easily. I can do a full book a month but not much else.

JM: Anything on your mind that you would like to tell readers?

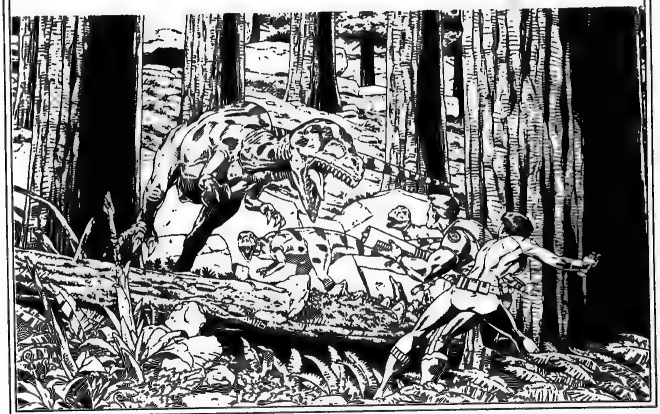
VS: Hmmm. Breaking into comics is something you've got to plug away at. It

takes years to get to be any good at it. I use to think, in high school, that some people are just born tremendous artists but there's a lot of development and an awful lot of things you have to learn. People are born with an aptitude but nobody's born a Michelangelo on page 3. The talent you're born with has to be developed, whether it's drawing or whatever. Proportions and layout comes with time, as does getting faster at your trade.

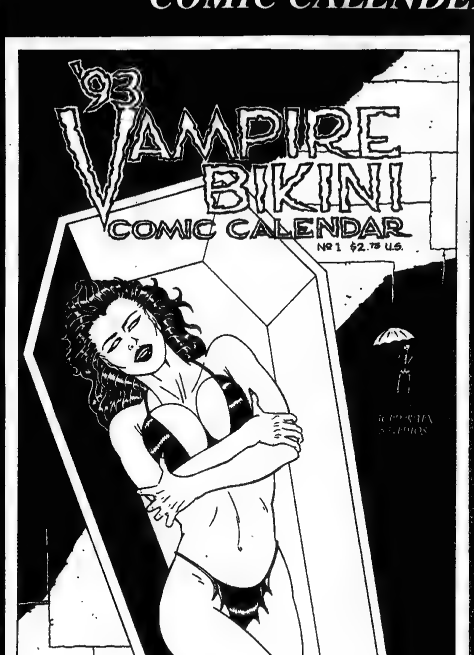
As with inking, it's more than just tracing the lines. An inker is responsible for cleaning the pencils. An inker has to make the shading and the lighting come through. It's a very learned technique. Just look at my own work and see how different inkers make it come out. My pencils have essentially been the same for years but looking at the inks you wouldn't probably know that.

JM: Yes, it's very different.

VS: Very, very different. Some inkers have a heavy style that they will change the pencils slightly to reflect their style. Other inkers are more heedful to the penciller's style. Most pen-



Something Different for the Vampire Fan:
THE
'93 VAMPIRE BIKINI COMIC CALENDER



From

Acid Rain Studios

One dozen beautiful, bikinied vampire vixens helping you plan your monthly activities and making sure you don't miss an important date...(*yeah, right!*). On sale now and available at comic shops everywhere!

cillers prefer the inkers who are true to their style. I'm very happy with the inkers I'm working with now. It's nice to see the stuff come out as you envisioned it.

JM: Obviously, yes. Okay, what's your views or opinion of the current comic industry right now?

VS: It's good to see the industry has grown as big as it has. It's good to see that some of these independent companies have gotten big enough so that they can actually do something. The competition between companies is certainly good for creators because it results in higher page rates and better deals for projects. There's more jobs and I think the industry should be aware that these are good times. It's not always this good and it shouldn't be taken for granted.

JM: Are you aware that there are over 120 publishers currently?

VS: Is that right? Well, I guess you got your main corps of like 20 and then the rest are much smaller.

JM: Right. But that means a lot more opportunities for aspiring artists. Of course, you may end up paying the publisher instead of getting paid these days.

VS: (Laughs) Very true!

JM: Do you do anything other than draw? Outside interests, I mean.

VS: I like to travel. That's something that comics has provided for me. I do a lot of conventions and I get to travel around the country.

JM: Different places you would have never seen, huh?

VS: Basically.

JM: Do you like to drive or fly?

VS: It depends on where I'm going. I like driving. I like to get away for the weekend with my wife.

JM: Well, with that I'm going to let you get away from me, Val.

VS: Well, good (laughs).

JM: Thanks for your time.

VS: Sure thing.

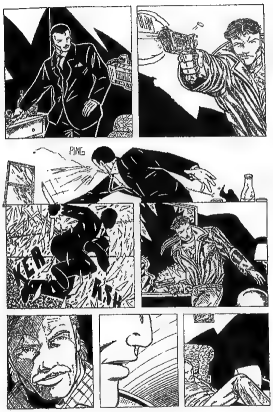
That's when we first saw my assailant.
COMIN' UP, GUYS! DRINK HEARTY!
BUT HE SAW US -- HE LOOKED RIGHT AT RANDY!
Y-Y-YEAH, HE DID!
IF WE WALK OUT, HE MIGHT TAKE IT AS AN INSULT! HE'D COME AFTER US AN' FRAG US BUT GOOD!
NO SPITTING
WE'LL SIT OVER IN THE CORNER AND HAVE A QUIET INOFFENSIVE GAME OF CARDS!
OH HECK! THAT'S LOBO!
YA KNOW HIS REP! HE'LL PROBABLY WRECK THIS PLACE--AN LIVE WITH IT!
H--MAYBE HE SHOULD JUST LEAVE...!
ZERO CLUTTER BOMB!

Interview
YARVA...YARVA...
DAEMONIC
SEMEIKS '90

PREVIEW

RACE DANGER

By Dwayne Haddix, Dan Lauer and Chris Leidenfrost
Published by Sky Comics



SLE
SKRRR

COMIC NEWS

Mirage News

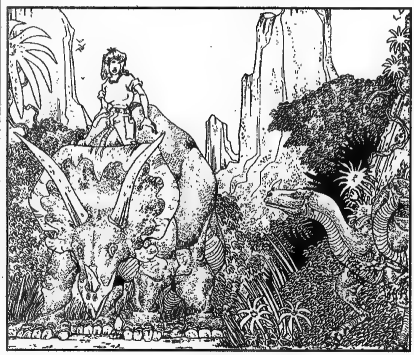
Dinosaurs and Aliens

Premiering in February, Mirage Publishing's new *Dino Island* is a two-part series that features the intricate artwork of Jim Lawson, a busy man of late with three different titles actually being released that month with his name to the art. In addition to his role as penciller on the regular *TMNT* series (issue #56), Jim has also produced work in *Plastron Cafe*.

Dino Island is a colorful tale that chronicles the adventures of a young aviatrix who lands on an island inhabited by dinosaurs... and aliens. "*Dino Island* was fun to work on," says Jim. "It was a change from doing the regular *TMNT* work... I tried to think of things that I really like and that would be interesting to see in a story. I like dinosaurs, love old World War II airplanes, and throw in some aliens, so they're all there."

Superheroes Sneak Peek

The second issue of *Plastron Cafe* features a look at one of the "Mirage Universe" superhero titles, *Xeno-Tech*. Written and drawn by Michael Dooney, the series will feature a high-tech team who must fight to save the Earth from inter-dimensional assaults, among other things! The series will premiere in mid '93. "But I just couldn't wait that long!" says Dooney and since he's also the editor of *Plastron Cafe*, Mirage just couldn't say no! The short story will be the first appearance of the Tech gang so don't miss it!



Dark Horse News

Dark Horse Comics publisher Mike Richardson announced today that the response to the *John Byrne's Next Men* trading card has been overwhelming. "We knew people were reading *John Byrne's Next Men* but we had no idea that we would get this kind of response to the trading card offer," stated managing editor Barbara Kesel. "We expected boatloads. We didn't expect those boats to be aircraft carriers."

With thousands of requests arriving at the Dark Horse offices in a little over a month, existing plans for the processing of the orders had to be revamped. "The system we were expecting to use wasn't up to the task. We've had to just about start again from scratch," said Edward Martin III, trading card editor for Dark Horse Comics.

The trading card offer was made available to the readers of the *John Byrne's Next Men* comic book. Issues #1 through #6 each contained a certificate coupon. All six coupons, plus one dollar to cover shipping and handling, had to be mailed to Dark Horse Comics, care of *John Byrne's Next Men* trading cards. For an order to be valid and entered into the system, the certificates and the dollar had to be verified by hand.

The cards are scheduled to ship in January.

Archie News

Archie Comic Publications, the leader in children's comic books, is pleased to announce some successful statistics for their creator-owned publication, the *Conservation Corps*. It was the second highest selling release for Archie in the direct sales market for the month of July and was the number one Archie mail order title for three months running! The *Conservation Corps*, co-created by Paul Castiglia and Dan Nakrosis, has received over five times the average reader mail response and continues to perform exceptionally on newsstands everywhere! Plans are underway for a continuing *Conservation Corps* comic series, and the property is currently being reviewed by major animation studios for a tentative fall '93 TV show.

Innovation News

Dark Shadows Return

An intimate stranger; the sisters next door; a Vampire's obsession... there's a new reason to fear the dark. *Dark Shadows* Book Two: "Lost In Thought" is a new fully-painted four-part saga from Innovation. It tells the tale of a young stranger named Nathan, who is cursed with the ability to read the minds of those he touches - and he has just saved the life of Victoria Winters on Widow's Hill! What does he learn of Barnabas Collins' vampiric curse... and the shrouded secrets of Collinwood's mysterious neighbors?

This new bi-monthly title is written by *Comics Buyer's Guide* luminary Maggie Thompson, edited by David Campiti and Scott Rockwell, and magnificently painted by Jose Pimentel. Elegant cover painting by Hector Gomez. Ships in February.

More Vampiric News

Earlier this year, Innovation solicited for a second printing of *Anne Rice's The Vampire Lestat #9*, because the first printing was shorted at the printer. Several thousand copies were damaged in the bindery, and retailers never received their full order. Fans and subscribers were shorted, and the issue proved to be scarce. The solicited second issue, however, was never produced because of a problem with the film and those orders were cancelled.

Now, the second printing of *Anne Rice's The Vampire Lestat #9* is printed and available for immediate orders! "Marius's Story" is faithfully adapted by Faye Perozich and painted by Daerick (*Necroscope*) Gross! Cover by John Bolton!

COMIC NEWS

Atomeka News

For the last four years, Atomeka's *AI*, under the direction of Dave Elliot and Gary Leach, has brought together creators like Alan Moore, Brian Bolland, John Bolton, Peter Milligan and Neil Gaiman into a single anthology. When Elliot and Managing Director Helen Carter took the reins at Tundra Publishing UK Ltd., they had a vision of a book list that would bring some of these creators together with the hottest international talent - John Wagner, Alan Grant, Simon Bisley, Dave Gibbons, Kevin O'Neill, Michael T. Gilbert - and a firestorm of young blood including Gordon Rennie, Martin Edmond, Dougie Braithwaite, Peter Snejberg, Steve Pugh, Gary Erskine and D'Israeli. This was to form a store of creative energy which is now approaching critical mass.

An unholy marriage between the twisted worlds of H.P. Lovecraft and *Twin Peaks*, the *Lords of Misrule* tells tales of things which happened to "a friend of a friend." This is the story of Kieron, and artist sent to the remote English village of Callow to work on paintings for the "Sword and Sorcery" books of Yolanda Marchant. But Callow is no ordinary village, it is one of the few remaining strongholds of the Sidh (pronounced Shay), and ancient pre-Celtic race of demi-gods who meddle in the world of humans for sport. What follows is a strange, disturbing journey into the unknown - all the more threatening, because Kieron's past holds a grisly secret that may drive him to madness ...or worse! Rack this one between *Hellblazer* and *The Books of Blood*.

Created by Gary Erskine (*Warheads, Punisher*) and John Tomlinson (*Doctor Who*) with Steve White and Dan Abnett (*Punisher*) with a cover by Simon Bisley, *The Lords of Misrule* is a 64 page full color prestige format one shot to be followed by a six-issue series. Ships in February.

Caliber News

U.N.Force Is In Color

Caliber goes color! That's what we said. The *U.N. Force* debuts in January.

Twenty five heroes. Nineteen nations. They are called together to save the world ...if they don't kill each other first. This is the premise of this new Gauntlet Comics imprint from Caliber Press. And it will be the first full color series from Gauntlet and it will serve as the cornerstone for the Gauntlet Universe and will lead to a series of spin-offs and tie-ins with other titles.

The Tiananmen Square Massacre, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the U.S. invasion of Panama, the dismantling of the Soviet Union ...the collapse of ideological communism sends shockwaves around the globe. For the first time in history, it is possible to assemble the most ambitious international team of heroes to combat global menaces which go beyond the scope of any one government. The United nations assembles 25 heroes from 19 nations as a superpowered international peacekeeping force. Within moments of the historic gathering, the "New World Order" is put to the test as deeply ingrained animosities between the operatives' governments is reflected by the operatives themselves. "This will be a series that delivers powerful action, tension between the characters, and yet still manage to cover many of the global events that are rapidly shaping our world," said creator and writer Brent Dorian Carpenter, head of Foundation Studios, who are packaging this title for Gauntlet Comics.

U.N.Force will begin in January and proceed on a monthly schedule. It will be the first series that will feature cross-overs from other gauntlet titles and will be a vital link in the upcoming cross-over epic from Gauntlet coming this summer, The Hero Agenda. One of the earliest villains in the series,

Masterspy, will be the focal villain in another series coming from Gauntlet and Foundation Studios, *Paradigm*. That series is also notable because it will feature the return of the lead character in the first collaboration of Foundation and Gauntlet, *Tekq*.

A companion series for *U.N.Force* is scheduled after the first few issues ship and they will feature various characters in spotlight and solo shots. Many of the origins will be revealed there as well as what enticed them to become super heroes. It will feature an array of guest artists. "I think people will be surprised by some of the names that will be contributing," said Carpenter, "but until the work is in, we don't want to promise anything." carpenter did mention that long time Marvel artist, Keith Pollard, would be doing one of the initial stories however.

Publisher Gary Reed said that *U.N.Force* is a very important series for the Gauntlet line as it will serve to hold the Gauntlet universe together. "It's our first color book," he said. "If it does real well, look for more of the Gauntlet line to go color as well. It's in the hands of the retailers and the fans." Reed said that many other series are in development and will begin to be scheduled once it can be determined if the series will be color or black and white.

U.N.Force is written by Brent Carpenter, pencilled by Paul Kowalski and inked by Aubrey Bradford. The first two issues will feature wraparound covers.

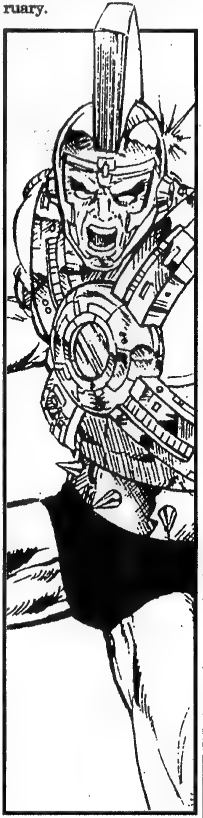
The Ultimate Cyborg Killer

In February, Gauntlet Comics will release *Berzerker*, a new title that is sure to become a fan favorite not only because of the action packed adventure but also for the contributions from noted talents, Erik Larsen and Rob Liefeld as well as cover and art from Angel Medina who is rapidly becoming noted among fans for his work for Marvel on Warlock and the Infinity Watch.

The initial story of this ongoing series is from Medina and the companion story will be by Steve Adams. *Berzerker* first appeared in Megaton Comics from creator Gary Carlson and is the saga of the ultimate cyborg killing machine! Chrononaut Alexander Kirk became America's first time traveller in the 1990's and he was catapulted into the nightmarish future world where sentient machines had enslaved mankind. His execution brought his corpse to the body banks where he was recreated as the destructive Berzerker! Will he save mankind, or destroy it?

The first issue will not only feature artwork from Medina inside but also a cover with Bill Anderson assisting on the inks. Included also will be a gallery of *Berzerker* artwork form Megaton alumni such as Erik Larsen, Rob Liefeld and Medina. If this wasn't enough, there is a special *Knight Watchman* short which will introduce the character before he spins off into his won escapades.

Berzerker will be bimonthly, with a possibility to go monthly. Ships in February.



COMIC NEWS

Cry For Dawn News

Tour de force artist Mark Beachum joins the ranks of Cry For Dawn acting as both writer and artist on *Synapse*, his first solo comic effort in several years.

Synapse is a visually stunning, painstakingly rendered surreal masterpiece, exploring the interchanging power roles in male-female relationships. The dominant female enigmas, ever populating Beachum's work, serve here as navigators of sexual fantasy.

For mature readers, this book was over a year in the making and purely a lobor of love. There's not a single line put to paper which does not convey emotion and meaning.

A 32-page one shot, with fully rendered B & W interiors with original color cover paintings. Ships in January.

DC News

Milestone - Breaking New Ground

DC Comics is proud to be associated with the grounbreaking launch of Milestone Media, a line of entirely new all-ages comics featuring the adventures of a culturally diverse mix of super-heroes.

The **Milestone** line will present exciting, original heroes and villains viewed from a unique perspective, battling in a world that closely approximates our own, and driven by internal conflicts that shape them in ways rarely explored in the comics medium. Milestone's initial monthly books offer an innovative approach to comics: a focus on African-American super-heroes as conceived by African-American creators, with an absolute commitment to quality in storytelling and art. Future projects will reflect a wide diversity of characters and creators.

The first wave of Milestones' ongoing titles are self-contained and accessible to casual readers, as well as to hardcore comics fans. At the same time, each book includes subplots and character relationships that reinforce the other titles. The stories are set in the fictional city of Dakota, which further unifies and strengthens the continuity of all the titles.

The first Milestone book is *Hardware*, written by Dwayne McDuffie, with art by Denys Cowan and Jim Palmiotti. The second Milestone launch-book is *Blood Syndicate*, written by McDuffie and Ivan Velez, Jr., with pencils by Trevor Von Eeden. Cover art of both books is by Cowna and Palmiotti. The Milestone covers will carry both the Milestone logo and the DC bullet, and all Milestone books feature special, full color process printing.

Hardware ships in February. *Blood Syndicate* ships in March.

Legionnaires - New Heroes for New Earth

Legionnaires, DC's new ongoing monthly series, marks a bold beginning for some of the best-loved heroes in comics history. *Legionnaires* successfully recaptures the youthful exuberance of the original *Legion*, combined with a mod-

ern style that will appeal to longtime *Legion* fans and to a whole new generation of readers.

In the aftermath of Earth's destruction, the shaken and weary survivors struggle to start a brave new world within the domed cities of New Earth. With the Legion of Super-Heroes departing for deep space, another group offers the citizens of New Earth a symbol of hope in these turbulent times. From the ruins of Metropolis, a certain clubhouse is salvaged; new uniforms are donned; new code-names are chosen; new members are admitted; old traditions return... and the Legionnaires are born.

Writers Tom and Mary Bierbaum (regular co-writers of *Legion of Super-Heroes*) team with penciller Chris Sprouse (whose open, fresh style dazzled comics fans in *Legends of the Dark Knight* and *Hammerlocke*) and inker Karl Story (who collaborated with Adam Hughes on the art for *Star Trek: Debt of Honor*) to deliver the ongoing exploits of the Legionnaires, with story and art ideally suited to the 30th Century's greatest adventurers. The premiere issue includes Part I of "A Guide to the 30th Century," a text feature with background and biographical information on the *Legionnaires*, with character design sketches by Sprouse & Story.

Legionnaires is an ongoing monthly series in DC's standard format, edited by KC Carlson & Michael Eury. Ships in February.

Superman: In Memoriam

DC presents a special post-mortem tribute to the greatest super-guy of them all in *Superman: The Legacy of Superman #1*. Written by Roger Stern, William Messner-Loebs, Jerry Ordway, Karl Kesel, and Dan Jurgens, the story revolves around Metropolis and its resident heroes who mourn the loss of their protector and friend. Outstanding feature artists for the book includes Dan Jurgens, Curt Swan (the definitive Silver Age super-penciller), Dennis Janke, Walt Simonson and Dennis Rodier. A beautiful Art Adams cover rounds out the package.

COMIC NEWS

Fleetway News

Head-Butting Time Traveller

Last seen in the DC/Fleetway classic *Judgement on Gotham*, Mean Machine is the psycho with the 4-way dial attached to hi head that goes from surly to mean to vicious to brutal! Now, he's featured in his very own adventure, as the "great" minds at Mega University try to undo the mental trauma of a lifetime in order to place Mean back into society. Good trick! What starts out as a reasoned plea for mental health ends up as a nasty, head-butting, lip-yanking, finger-breaking, throat-piercing trek through time, as Mean tries to save his doomed family from certain death! Another good trick!

Fans of Dredd, Mean Machine, and oddly enough, the Three Stooges, will revel in the excessive violence of a nut with his dial stuck on "Four!". Wickedly funny stuff from the pen of John Wagner and superbly painted by the talented Richard Dolan.

Mean Machine is a 48 page one-shot in fully-"pain"ted color. Ships in February.

Heroic News

Heroic Publishing will polybag a different Reiki Warriors trading card by Daerick Gross in each issue of the 8-part "Rings" octology leading up to the June debut of the Reiki Warriors' own comic. The first 3 titles of the

8-part storyline will be *League of Champions #11* (with a Mister No card), *Sparkplug #2* (with a Murcielaga She-Bat card), and *Rose #3* (with a Soliloquy Jones card). Heroic publishing stressed that the first printing of these cards will only be available with the comics.

Watch for your very own beautifully painted *Sparkplug* trading card by Daerick Gross inserted in *Arena Magazine #9*!

Image News

Spawn And Cerebus

After two intense issues of *Spawn* written by Alan Moore and Neil Gaiman, Dave Sim takes over for the weirdest cross-over in comics... Spawn and Cerebus! (Or is it?) Spawn is flung into the Erebus realm of deep blackness. This plays well with their "reverse Wizard of Oz" coloring: the story will start out in color, and switch to black and white when Cerebus appears! Add in a handful of humor and this becomes an instant quality book. No fancy cover, just a heck of a tale.

Spawn #10 ships in February and features a pull-out poster of *Bloodwulf* by Rob Liefeld.

Jim Lee And Stormwatch!

The Cold War is over! The world no longer needs to fear the Midnight Hour of Nuclear Armageddon. Unfortunately, new crises are on the horizon for this Brave New World. To meet these challenges head-on, the United Nations has created a band of Brave New Heroes, "The StormWatch."

In this premier issue, Battalion, the leader of the StormWatch team, is sent on a mission to Sarajevo where he must confront the horrors of the civil war in Yugoslavia. even after the missions's completion, however, the consequences of its aftermath follow him home to America, where he is forced to fight for the survival of his very own family.

StormWatch #1 is written by Jim Lee and Brandon Choi, with art by Scott Clark and Karl Alstaetter and a cover by Lee. Ships in February.

BONUS: Each issue will contain a special coupon. Collect all three and redeem them for the *Limited Edition StormWatch Trading Card*, drawn by Jim Lee.

Kitchen Sink News

Donald Simpson and Savage Dragon. Donald Simpson and *Splitting Image*. Yes, it's the unquenchable Donald Simpson making his mark with Image Comics. His team-up with Erik Larsen, *Savage Dragon vs. Savage Megaton Man* has come! His two-issue parody for Image, *Splitting Image*, featuring Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld, Todd MacFarlane and more is expected to sell better than wildflowers.

But Kitchen Sink knew Don Simpson when... and so did you. So, for this February, but actually much sooner, Kitchen Sink is relisting Don Simpson's first softcover collection, *Megaton Man*, reprinting issues 1-4 of the groundbreaking parody. It will feature an emblazoned can't miss gold sticker reminding fans of Simpson's relationship with Image.

Don Simpson and Megaton Man burst on the scene in 1984 establishing Don as one of the sharpest wits on the comic scene. Megaton Man was the most powerful entity in the world. And yet, he was constantly duped, made to look a fool, and was regarded by everyone as a boob. But a nice boob. Megs has teamed and/ or battled with The Megatropolis Quartet (Fantastic Four), Wall-Man (Spider-Man), Bad Guy (Marvel Management), and a host of others. The comic was a hit, as was the collec-

tion of the first four issues.

You know that Image fans are going to love *Savage Dragon vs. Megaton Man*. So here's your chance to cash in with a great book that tells Meg's origin! It's Kitchen Sink's stickered, shameless, Savage re-listing of the month!

Malibu News

Malibu Denotes Megaverse Month

The countdown to the big bang release of Malibu Comics' Megaverse has begun. Coming in June 1993, Malibu will be releasing a full line of interrelated super-hero comics by some of the best creators in the industry. "I'm real excited about the future of the Megaverse," said Chris Ullm, Editor-in-Chief of Malibu, "It's really kicking into high gear, and the first wave of titles is going to set this business on its ear."

Asking a few of the writers involved with the Megaverse how they felt about its creation, Steve Gerber (*Man-Thing, The Defenders*) said, "Having participated in the early meetings on the Megaverse, I'm very excited about the prospects for this new line of comics... some highly original concepts and characters have already come out of the preliminary work, and there's a genuine spirit of camaraderie developing among the writers, the artists, and Malibu's editorial personnel. I think the Malibu Megaverse is going to send a very pleasant shockwave through the comic book industry in 1993."

Steve Englehart (*The Avengers, Iron Man, Batman*) commented, "This is the first time in a long time that a company has asked me to be as creative as possible without being subject to corporate whim. It's an excellent concept for a company, and reminds me of the Marvel of old when they were at their most creative."

Len Strazewski (*Starman, Justice Society of America*) added, "I'm very excited... the ideas are so incredibly broad based that I feel it will offer something for everyone. I'm especially excited about being able to swap ideas, participate and work with some of the comic book greats who I enjoyed reading when I was a collector."

James Hudnall (*Espers*) said, "I'm ready to kick @$$! and take no prisoners! This is something I've been wanting to do for some time. Now, I get the chance and I guarantee many people will be reeling."

Always prolific author Mike Barr (*Outsiders, Star Trek, Detective*) explained, "Malibu wants our creativity and we want respect... we're both getting what we want."

And James Robinson (*Legends of the Dark Knight, Terminator: End Game*) tells us, "It's very exciting to be working on a project with such talented writers. I'm particularly enthusiastic to be creating a new reality from the ground up."

It's not just a big bang, it's a Mega-Bang. Catch it in June '93.

Kanalz Takes Over Ex-Mutants

Malibu's own full color *Ex-Mutants* series gets even better following on the heels of a first issue sell-out and the conclusion of a three-part storyline. Beginning with *Ex-Mutants #4*, Hank Kanalz, scripter of Image Comics' *Brigade* and *Youngblood*, takes over the series as the regular writer! Paul Pelletier and Ken Branch remain as the series' artists.

COMIC NEWS

Kanalz will take the *Ex-Mutants* storyline in an all-new direction. In *Ex-Mutants #4*, the team must leave Professor Kildare in order to find a new power source for his conversion machine. In their quest, they will have adventures they never dreamed of -- Piper gets kidnapped by an old mutant who wants to fix her up with his son and the rest of the gang falls into a seemingly bottomless black pit!

Kanalz said, "We've tried to give the group a purpose in life. They're the only humans left on the Earth that we know about so far." Kanalz added that he will be touching on some ecological concerns, family values and religion. "I approach Ex-Mutants as just a comic book, but if we are able to communicate certain themes and values, positive values, I think we're doing a good thing."

Malibu's Creative Director, Tom Mason, also co-creator and co-writer of the Ex-Mutants series, is excited about bringing new blood to the book. He said, "I'm more than happy to turn over the burden of writing a monthly team book to a hot young writer like Hank Kanalz. I'm looking forward to seeing what he can do with characters that I helped create."

Ex-Mutants #4 ships in February.

Marvel News

See Ya' Shulkie

She-Hulk #50 ships in February and fan-fave John Byrne is saying goodbye. To commemorate the event, this 48-page extravaganza has a special foil cover and will feature art and stories by Walt Simonson, Terry Austin, Dave Gibbons, Adam Hughes, Howard Chaykin, and of course, John Byrne, who'll each do She-Hulk in their own unique style.

She-Hulk #50 also introduces the great new creative team that will take over with

#51. Funnyman Michael Eury (*Cool World*) will script the series and Todd Britton will contribute outstanding artwork! Issue #50 also leads up to key developments in Jennifer's life that no She-Hulk fan can afford to miss, namely her death (spoofing another well-known superhero, of course)! Marvel has been working overtime to give She-Hulk the magnificent milestone celebration it deserves. Don't miss it, or you'll miss out!

Ships in February.

GROOving To A Different Beat

Groo's 100th issue arrives this month, and we're celebrating! This book is the hallmark of Marvels' humor titles this month, and we expect it to sell accordingly! *Groo the Wanderer #100*, a 48 page issue, begins a new chapter in Groo's life when he acquires several extra IQ points and gets into more trouble than ever! Heightened intelligence leads Groo to ponder a new direction that will fill his adventures with a whole new cast of characters in #101. It will also have readers falling down with laughter.

To keep those laughs coming, Marvel is also publishing *Groo: Expose*. The book reprints *Groo the Wanderer #17 -#20*, which includes some of Groo's most notorious exploits, namely the run-in with the people-eating piranhas and the confrontation with his spiteful sister, Groovella. New *Groo* readers will appreciate the chance to read these hilarious episodes, and long-time fans will savor the collection like fine wine.

Ships in February.

Hero Swarm Continues

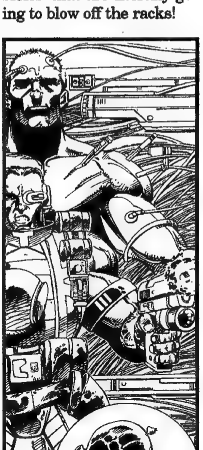
The British invasion roars on with the premiere of three new Marvel UK titles this month. *Wild Thing* takes place in 1996, when Virtual Reality is no longer a game. Users plug in not only to escape reality, but to deny it

altogether, and hard-core addicts often don't emerge from their homes for weeks. To combat addiction and illegal trading, Nikki Doyle, an ex-black marketeer of the technology, is hired to declare war on offenders. As Wild Thing, she meets up with Virtual Reality incarnations of Venom and Carnage, and the destruction of the VR Marvel Universe becomes a nightmare all too real! *Wild Thing #1* has a specially embossed cover.

Black Axe #1 debuts this month, too, with a cover by John Romita, Jr.. Black Axe is the ultimate gun-for-hire, equipped with an arsenal of hardware and one bad attitude (Punisher readers are going to love this book). Death's Head II guest stars in #1, and you know what that means. This book is going to be dynamically down and dirty!

The third book in Marvel UK's profit-building triumvirate is *Super Soldiers*, and it packs the hard-hitting action that *Punisher* and *'Nam* readers crave. It's got a beautifully silver embossed logo and a fresh, crammed to the limit with action story. Mortally wounded soldiers, recruited by the British government, are genetically enhanced and drafted into a project to perform in unusual - and hair raising - combat situations. When one of them wakes up from cryogenic sleep with only revenge on his mind, USAgent finds out the hard way that the result sure isn't pretty!

The British Invasion continues in February so don't miss out on *Wild Thing, Black Axe* and *Super Soldiers*! Marvel UK has a genius for producing hot new series' that are literally going to blow off the racks!



Oh, could it be...the Son of Satan?

Daimon Hellstrom's legion of fans are in for a treat when he gets his own book this month! *Hellstorm: Prince of Lies,* a new ongoing series, debuts and Marvel is commemorating the first issue with a parchment cover illustrated with red thermographic (raised) ink.

The cover is a first for any Marvel book and will make it scream for reader attention. Inside, Gabriel the Devil Hunter investigates a cult called the Book School and discovers that its leader is none other than Daimon Hellstrom himself! In the course of the series, Daimon will act as a magnet for a variety of occultists and spirits, including Dr. Strange, Ghost Rider and others. The story is scripted by Rafael Nieves (*Tales from the Heart of Africa*) and lushly penciled by Michael Bair.

Ships in February.

Metro's Meteor Man Mania

By now, you've probably heard the advance word on *Meteor Man*, the major motion picture due from MGM this March. Well, obviously Marvel heard it, too, and leapt at the opportunity to publish a comic book adaptation.

Meteor Man tells the story of Jefferson Reed, a substitute teacher plagued by the fear of success, failure, confrontation, isolation - you name it. When he is accidentally endowed with superhuman powers, life only becomes more complicated. How does a neurotic super hero handle a crisis?

Marvel is certain that you're going to be captivated by the *Meteor Man Movie Adaptation*. So certain, in fact, that they're planning a 6-issue limited series based on the character to follow the one-shot adaptation. The limited series is based on the movie, but will contain all-new adventures that will be available only through your comic shop!

THEY'RE **BACK!** (FOR THE FIRST TIME)

DAERICK GRÖSS' **REIKI warriors™**

HEROIC PUBLISHING BRINGS AWARD-WINNING DAERICK GRÖSS ON BOARD RECREATING HIS *REIKI WARRIORS*™ AND *MURCIÉLAGA, SHE-BAT*™ TITLES. *SHE-BAT* (CURRENTLY FOUR TIMES A YEAR) GOES BI-MONTHLY IN MAY, ALTERNATING WITH THE *REIKI WARRIORS* BEGINNING IN JUNE.

THE JUNE PREMIER ISSUE COMPLETES A STORYLINE THAT BEGINS WITH THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS STARRING IN SOLO STORIES SET TO APPEAR ACROSS THE ENTIRE *HEROIC* LINE OF TITLES DURING MARCH, APRIL AND MAY.

WATCH FOR: *RINGS FOR A DEMON . . .*

IN MARCH

- STARRING MR. NO
- STARRING SHE-BAT
- STARRING SOLILOQUY JONES

IN APRIL

- STARRING RHESUS
- STARRING SQUAMUS

IN MAY

- STARRING ETHEREAL BLACK
- STARRING SIFU
- STARRING THE REIKI WARRIORS

COMIC NEWS

Millennium/ Comico News

Sorcery. Suicide. Seduction. Three elements that lead to the name Anne Rice. Three enshrouded manners of humanity that untimely bring you to *Anne Rice's The Witching Hour*! The biggest Anne Rice comic book ever because it has so many good things going, Millennium and Comico offer gorgeous John Bolton covers and brilliant interior art, an intriguing supernatural storyline dripping with gore, demonic horror and seduction and inserted into these issues will be original *Talamasca* Calling Cards. These are the first ever occult calling cards in a comic. The collectible card is an exact replica of the one used in the novel and the comic by the mysterious Talamasca, a secret society which has been investigating occult occurrences since 758 A.D.. The group, stationed in London, Paris and New Orleans, plays a crucial role in the horrifying events that unfold in Anne Rice's biggest novel yet.

Soon to be a major motion picture directed by Richard Donner (*Lethal Weapon*), this is a series not to be missed!

Topps News

Topps comics is proud to announce the signing of an exclusive long-term agreement with legendary comic book artist Jack Kirby! Kirby, a major creative force behind such Marvel Comics characters as the Incredible Hulk,

the X-Men, Fantastic Four, and Captain America, is widely recognized as the "King of Comics." He has granted Topps exclusive rights to his entire treasure chest of new characters, concepts, and stories which he created over decades but were never before published. Jim Salicrup, editor-in-chief of Topps Comics, estimates that the volume is so great, it will take many years for the company to publish everything.

"It's a great honor to be associated with the Topps organization in this exciting new venture," Kirby said. "The artists and writers they've chosen to work on my material are top notch pros and perfect for the task. Roz and I are looking forward to successful and gratifying results."

Topps is reuniting many members of the legendary '60s Bullpen to carry out Jack Kirby's never-before-seen visions. Writers and artists including Roy Thomas, Steve Ditko, Don Heck, Gary Friedrich, Dick Ayers, John Severin, Gerry Conway, - plus others - are collaborating in this publishing event. It's the start of a whole new era - and that's no lie!

Tundra News

Tundra Publishing was crowned Best Foreign Comic Publisher for the period 1990-92 by the International Jury of Lucca at the prestigious convention held in Lucca every year. The prize *Yellow Kid and Gran Guigini* was awarded for "Excellence in publishing and commitment to the voice of new, exciting and experimental artist in the field of comics."

This is the first time an English-language publisher has been honored by the festival. Tundra, founded by *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* Co-Creator Kevin Eastman, has offices in both Northampton, MA and London. Barely two years old, the company has published a diverse mix of titles from the award-winning *Cages* to critically acclaimed titles like *Frank in the River*, Tundra UK's controversial *SKIN*, and Mike Allred's *Madman*. Tundra is also working with big name artists such as Bernie Wrightson, Alan Moore, Simon Bisley, Rick Veitch, Frank Frazetta and others with a continued commitment to protecting creator's rights to ownership of properties and control of all aspects of the publishing process.

This year's festival was dedicated to English and American comics and included guest artists and publishers from around the world. Among so many distinguished publishers a spokesperson from Tundra admitted he was "surprised".

COMIC NEWS
Warp News

Warp Graphics is pleased to announce the appointment of Eisner and Harvey Award nominee Sarah Byam to pen the ongoing *Elfquest: The Hidden Years* series. Byam's first issue will be #6, shipping in March, following the initial five-issue run by Elfquest creators Wendy and Richard Pini.

Ms. Byam, a Detroit native, was recently nominated for an Eisner Award as Best Writer, and for a Harvey Award as Most Promising New Talent for her mini-series *Billi 99*, published by Dark Horse. Her other scripting credits include a stint as Mike Grell's assistant, *Green Arrow Annual #5, Captain Atom*, and a *Black Canary* mini-series. She has just finished the comic adaptation of Marian Zimmer Bradley's *The Mists of Avalon*. The *Comics Buyer's Guide* has called her "a writer to watch."

Byam's interests cover a wide range, from musical theatre, culinary creativity and country music to poetry, advocating the rights of abused children, and tribal culture studies. Drawn to storytelling and art in childhood, she won a number of awards and scholarships for her creative skills.

"I'm really excited," says Byam. "I've been interested in doing *Elfquest* for a long time, and the timing came together at the right moment." When asked what originally drew her to *Elfquest* as a reader, she said, "I thought Wendy and Richard's book was the most enjoyable, best written and most coherent I'd ever seen." Byam went on to add "there is little opportunity to talk about the small battles of nature, character and self..." in comics today, saying that she was pleased to be able to explore "natural, earth-based stories..." through *The Hidden Years*.

Warp publisher Richard Pini added, "Sarah is the first writer, since Wendy and I started the title, we've felt comfortable asking to script the *Elfquest* canon. She's working closely with Wendy to maintain the feel and quality of *Elfquest*."

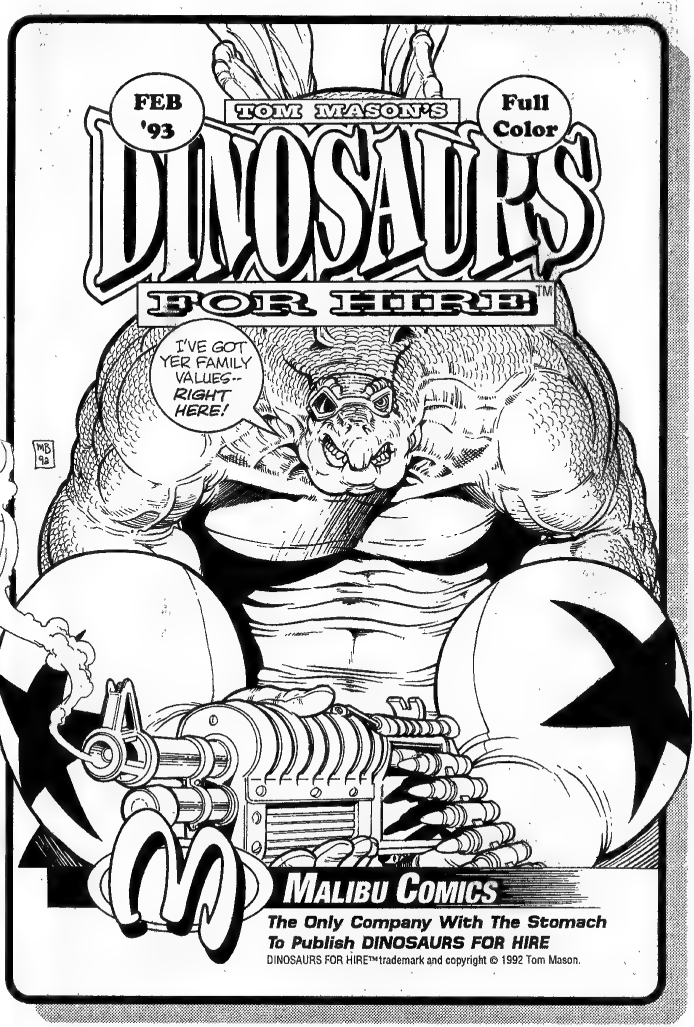
Co-creator Wendy Pini commented, "My confidence in Sarah Byam's ability to capture the essence of *Elfquest* can be explained in one word: spirit. Sarah's background, her life experiences, her sensitivity and her willingness to express herself openly are all the qualifications anyone needs to tell stories that are truthful and that come from the heart. That's what *Elfquest* is all about, and I know it will be a joy to work with her."

BLOOD & ROSES
Jerry Smith, Gene Gonzalez and Bob Hickey

THE SEEKER
Joe Martin, Willie Peppers and Allen Freeman

MORGANA X
Quinton Hoover and Allen Freeman

THIS SUMMER.
SKY COMICS.


FEB '93
TOM MASON'S
Full Color
DINOSAURS FOR HIRE™
I'VE GOT YER FAMILY VALUES-- RIGHT HERE!
MALIBU COMICS
The Only Company With The Stomach To Publish DINOSAURS FOR HIRE
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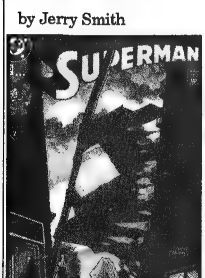
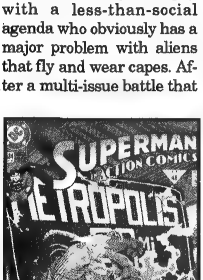
Comics Now

by Jerry Smith



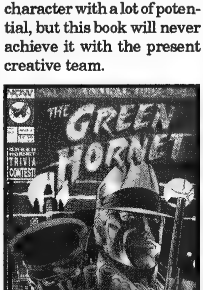
If DC had to do away with their most popular character and top money-maker, they at least picked the right way to do it and the right team for the job. Superman was attacked by ultra-meanie Doomsday, a bad guy with a less-than-social agenda who obviously has a major problem with aliens that fly and wear capes. After a multi-issue battle that would do any Lee/Kirby fan proud, [Spoiler Warning: In case you've just returned from Venus and haven't yet heard the ending to this story on the NBC Nightly News--and don't want to, skip to the next review title] Doomsday kills the Man of Steel. This is no dream, no imaginary story (no more than usual, that is), no bull. Superman is dead. The end is senseless and sad, but as always expected, Superman dies a hero.



The scene at the end of *Superman #75* is one of the most powerful in recent comics history. The three page pull-out features a devastated Lois Lane sitting in a pile of rubble, cradling her dead love Superman in her arms. A sad and moving scene.

The entire "Death of Superman" saga was handled perfectly by all of the creators connected with it. We all know Supes will be back in one form or another, but I'm sure we have lots of great "aftermath" stories to enjoy until that happens. Onward to "Funeral for a Friend", the next Superman storyline. Or rather, the first ex-Superman storyline.

Looking at some Now comics, The *Green Hornet Annual #1* is full of the same bad writing and mediocre art that caused me to give up the regular series some time ago. The latest Green Hornet is Paul Reid, who is extremely stupid, even for a guy who dresses all in green and catches criminals. The main villain is a bland amalgam of a million banal street hoods we've seen in a million absurd comics, and of course the obligatory "cute babe" is totally brainless. Even the usually well written Kato comes off as a reactionary boob. The Green Hornet has always been a character with a lot of potential, but this book will never achieve it with the present creative team.



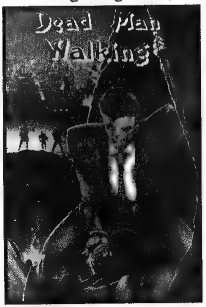
Another Now book, *Kato II*, proves that the creative team makes or breaks the comic. In this rollocking martial arts adventure by Mike Baron and Val Mayerik, Hayashi Kato, partner of the Green Hornet, reluctantly agrees to protect an Axl Rose-type, spoiled rock and roll star. Kato is soon thrown into the world of heavy metal stardom, complete with drugs, groupies, and star stalkers.

The martial arts in *Kato II*, as in all Baron books, are perfectly choreographed, and Kato's contemptous treatment of rock star Sragow's decadent lifestyle is priceless. Also, since Now has rights to the likenesses of the actors who portrayed the Green Hornet and Kato in the '60s television series, Kato is drawn as Bruce Lee at age fifty (a nice touch). Anything written by Mike Baron is going to be good, *Kato II* is especially so.

I didn't expect much from Now's *Universal Soldier #1*, so I was pleasantly surprised to like it. I didn't see the movie, and usually movie adaptations are not literary masterpieces, so I had very low hopes for this one. Like the movie, Soldier tells the story of soldiers who were killed in action and then brought back to life through some mysterious government project. It's funny, people wonder where all of our tax money goes--it must be all these clandestine government projects we only hear about in the movies and on A Current Affair. I hope President-elect Clinton pays attention to this stuff, it would save a lot of tax money if he cut off all funding to clandestine government super-soldier projects.

Universal Soldier isn't great, but it has a lot of action and the art isn't bad. If you enjoyed the movie, you'll probably enjoy this.

The less said about Now's *Fright Night 3-D*, the

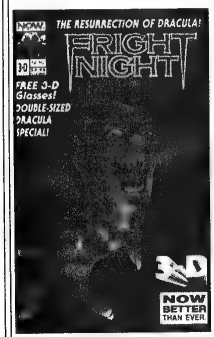


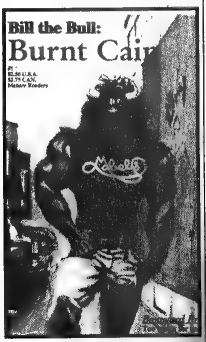
better. For 3-D enthusiasts with too much money only.

BoneYard Press recently sent some of their books for review, and I have to say they are some of the most disgusting comics I've ever seen. *Devil's Bite*, despite its provocative, well-drawn cover, contains a confusing story about sexual bondage and child abuse. Comics are capable of doing successful, meaningful stories about such subjects, but in *Devil's Bite* they are exploitive excuses to sell comics.

The same goes for BoneYard's *Young Jeffrey Dahmer* comic. I haven't seen art this crude since the black and white comic bust of the mid-eighties. This is extremely raw stuff, guaranteed to turn the strongest of stomachs. Worse yet, this book doesn't even try to present a coherent story, as if that would be possible considering the subject. Apparently BoneYard doesn't much care about the families of the victims Dahmer murdered, or the fact that they are exploiting the name of a mass murderer for money. BoneYard is packaging fiction about a deranged killer for a buck.

I'll defend anything, even comics from BoneYard Press, on the basis of the First Amendment right to freedom of expression. But books like this put those feelings to the test. In a house ad for another of their books, *Bill the Bull: Burnt Cain*, it is written: "If your retailer doesn't carry our books send us his name and we'll have him whacked out." I have to wonder if they're kidding.





Not Really The News!

Nicieza to Take Over All Marvel Titles

by Jerry Smith

Marvel Entertainment Inc. announced today that staff editor Fabian Nicieza would take over as permanent writer on all of its monthly titles except *Barbie Fashion*. Nicieza, whose most recent work includes the *Nomad* comic and many of Marvel's "mutant" titles, such as *X-Men* and *X-Force*, has long been known as one of Marvel's busiest, most prolific writers.

Effective immediately, Nicieza will add to his monthly schedule as writer *Amazing Spider-Man, Avengers, Avengers West Coast, Barbie, Cage, Captain America, Conan, Daredevil, Darkhawk, Doom 2099, Fantastic Four, Fish Police, Guardians of the Galaxy, G.I. Joe, Incredible Hulk, Iron Man, Marvel Age, Marvel Tales, Namor, Punisher, Punisher 2099, Quasar, Ravage 2099, Silver Sable, Silver Surfer, Sleepwalker, Spectacular Spider-Man, Spider-Man 2099, Thor, Web of Spider-Man, Wrestling WCW, X-Factor, X-Men Classics* (with new stories by Nicieza), *Wonder Man, What If, Marvel Comics Presents, Alpha Flight, Darkhold, Deathlok, Death's Head II, Dr. Strange, Excalibur, Spirits of Vengeance, Ghost Rider, Hell's Angel, Moon Knight, Morbius, Motormouth, Original Ghost Rider Rides* Again (with new stories by Nicieza), *Pendragon, Punisher War Journal, Punisher War Zone, She-Hulk, Shield, Spider-Man, Tek World, Terror, Inc., The Nam, Warheads, Warlock & the Infinity Watch, Wolverine, Groo, Conan Saga* (with new stories by Nicieza), *Savage Sword of Conan,* and *Nightbreed.*

"I'll only be plotting *Barbie Fashion*, with regular Barbie writer Barbara Slate," stated Nicieza in a recent telephone interview. "I'll be writing the regular *Barbie* series, but I just don't have time for everything. I want to keep my slate open for possible assignments from other comics companies. DC Comics and I are working on a deal for me to take over their Superman, Batman, and Justice League groups of titles. Gee, it's premature to talk about that, can you cut that part out....?"

When asked if writing well over sixty titles a month was too much for one writer to handle, Nicieza said, "No. Stan Lee wrote Marvel's entire output in the early sixties, why can't one man do the same now? Besides, Marvel comics read like they're all written by the same person anyway, so who will be able to tell the difference?"

When reached for comment, Marvel Entertainment President Terry Stewart stated, "We at Marvel were tired of all of our talent deserting to more profitable companies, wanting raises, insisting on a share of the profits from the characters they create, etc. So, we put ourselves in a position where we didn't have to deal with that. We fired everyone and hired Fabian to take over all of our regular titles, along with our prestige formats and hardcovers. He's a solid writer with a solid fan following, I think we made the right move. Now if only we could find one artist to draw all the books." Stewart went on to say John Byrne was a top contender for the job.

When asked about the fate of current artists and writers on Marvel's books, Stewart insisted they all already had employment lined up. "They're all working on titles for Image," said Stewart. An Image Comics spokesman confirmed that all ex-Marvel professionals were indeed working on Youngblood - related miniseries with Rob Liefield.

"So it all works out," commented Fabian Nicieza. "Nobody lost their jobs really, and I'm the Man now."

The above story exists only in the writer's fevered imagination. Or does it?

PREVIEW

HITMEN

By Raff Ienco - Published by Caliber/ Gauntlet

BRIT BITS

News and gossip from across the ocean by Paul H.Birch

Although the weekly anthology title, *Toxic!* folded quickly from Apocalypse/Neptune leaving money owed to several creators, a number of the creator-owned series within found new homes.

Alan Grant and John Wagner's award-winning series, *The Bogie Man* was turned into a BBC1 TV movie starring Scottish comic actor, Robbie Coltrane, and former *Ultravox* vocalist, Midge Ure. A graphic novel collection of the *President Quayle* series appeared from Tundra UK.

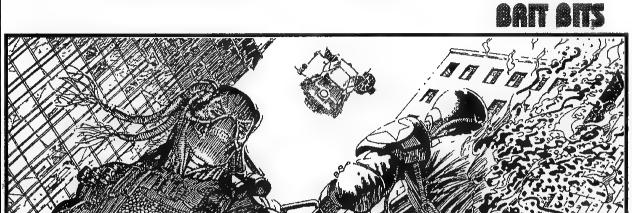
Tundra UK was recently "editorially refocussed," due to "a short burst of reality". What this boils down to is the fact that they're no longer going to do about a zillion and one titles after all, but the books they will do should come out on time, and they look to be sound commercial ventures.

One of the casualties has been *Glory*. *Glory* which was planned as a weekly soccer comic, edited by Frank Plowright and Stuart Green. To be honest with you, the very idea of watching a load of blokes kick a lump of leather around a field bores me rigid, but over the years sport has been as popular in British comics as mutants at Marvel, and from all I've been told about *Glory*, *Glory* it was gonna be a cracking good read. By the time you read this it may have found a new publisher.

Tundra UK are now differentiating themselves from the parent company by using Garry leach and Dave Elliott's Atomeka as an imprint. The first release was *White Trash* by Gordon Rennie, and *Toxic!*'s original *Accident Man* artist, Martin Edmonds. Unfortunately it transpires the initial print run had to be pulped due to the Elvis Presley estate being non-too pleased with certain events within.

Atomeka has a number of books in the works: *Monster Massacre* will be seven issues of "senseless violence and steroids". Amongst the contributors to this anthology are Simon Bisley and Dave Gibbons. John Tomlinson teams with his original Pendragon artist, Gary Erskine for *Lords of Misrule*, described as "Twin

SEX WARRIOR Published by Dark Horse International.



SEX WARRIOR by Dark Horse International

Peaks meets Lovecraft", first as a graphic novel, followed by six regular issues. *Terminator: Enemy Within* scripter Ian Edginton delivers the mini-series *Kingdom of the Wicked* beautifully illustrated by D'Israeli in this tale of a children's author's nightmares about his past. *Born Again* is by Jamie Hewlett and Phillip Bond, and *Pales Horses* is by Dan Abnett, Steve White and Erskine. David Hine offers *Strange Embrace*, and Steve Tanner and Pete Venters are behind *Sweetmeats*.

Pat Mills and Kevin O'Neill's superhero killer, *Marshal Law* also ran in *Toxic!*, before going to greener pastures at Dark Horse, Mills has taken two other projects to Dark Horse, namely the earlier mentioned *Accident Man* and *Sex Warrior*.

Accident Man is a typically pleasant Mills story - Not! It concerns a Mr. Fix-it assassinator, but should you be expecting a cross between James Bond and The Punisher, you'd still be out in the ball park. Duke Mighten, who took on art duties for the second *Accident Man* tale returns for this three issue series.

The third *Accident Man* artist, John Erasmus is inking and coloring the two issue *Sex Warrior* mini-series over some of the most detailed pencils I've seen in many a year, courtesy of Mike McKone. Check out the art on this one at all costs! Coincidently, Erasmus also works in a completely cartoon vein for which he won the 'Best Artist in Humour Comics Award' at Gloucester Comics Fair the summer just gone, plus being the artist for the 'Best Strip' with *Special Agent Smegg* published in UT.

Bryan Talbot's busy working on *The Tale of One Bad Rat*. The three issue series about which he says, "At the moment I want to do it like *Hardboiled*, I don't think it'd suit a small comic size." *The Tale of One Bad Rat* is aimed at the general book market and looks to be as different from his recent *Legends of the Dark Knight* stories as chalk is from cheese. "I've read three books on rats already, twelve on child abuse, and I've a pile of books on the Lake District (a British tourist spot)", Bryan told me concerning the research he's undertaking for Bad Rat. Further titles revealed thus far from Dark Horse International include *Aliens: Crusade* by Michael Cook and Christian Gournay (this partnership continues for Marvel UK's Gene Machine mini-series, summer '93), *Ring of Roses* by Das Petrou and John Watkiss, both four issue mini-series, the latter in black and white, and Europe's Mathias Shultheiss's *Propeller Man* which will be a twelve issue maxi-series.

Another flying creature to hit the shops in '93 will be the *Man-Bat* mini-series from Englishmen Jamie Delano and John Bolton. The art seen so far is rather nifty. "I had a good laugh writing Mr. and Mrs. Man-Bat, and their offspring, Virgil and Eugene", says Jamie, continuing, "They live in a desert cave and get up to all sorts of soap opera nonsense. It has its serious moments. Largely the story deals with ecological concerns and bio-engineering".

Mr. Delano's *Ghost Dancing* originally intended for Disney's Touchstone line, has moved to DC's vertigo imprint. The writer describes

it thus: "It deals with everything from 1990s new age echoes of the 1960s sub-culture, designer drugs and hippies, to Californian earthquake culture, the apocalypse, and native Americans."

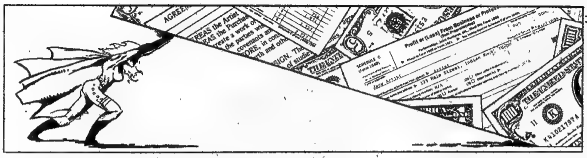
Graphic novels have edged their way into British bookstores. Penguin has been at the forefront mainly acting as British publisher for American work like *Maus* (Art Spiegelman appeared on British TV, as have Robert Crumb and Alan Moore), *Cartoon History of the Universe* and *Barefoot Gen*. Harper Collins has signed to reprint Eclipse material, and Mandarin Books are currently doing the same for *A.B.C. Warriors, Judge Dredd* and *Killing Time* from Fleetway Publications. But it's not just reprint material, both Lion and Victor Gollancz are originating work.

Shadow's Edge was written by Terry Murray with fully painted artwork by Jeff Anderson, its second volume is due Spring '93. Lion is generally viewed as a publisher of Christian material with their books seen in over 70 languages worldwide. *Shadow's Edge* does have Christian undertones but in the main it can be categorized as a fantasy saga. As Terry states, "We're not really regarding this as a heavy-messaged story.. In some ways we're just proving that Christians can make a perfectly good graphic novel. That in itself breaks down the stereotyped view of Christians, and hopefully some Christians will break down their views and no longer be wrongly informed about things like comics". Previously Anderson had plied his trade drawing action-orientated material for 2000AD and Marvel UK, the variety of style and range of subject matter in *Shadow's Edge* is something he's thankful for, commenting," In comics you tend to get categorized. That's what's been so good with this, I've been allowed to do so much."

Victor Gollancz has been cautious in their publishing schedules, but books have included Alan Moore and Oscar Zarate's *A Small Killing* and *Signal to Noise* by Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean, and more recently *The Minotaur's Tale* by Al Davison, whose *The Spiral Cage*, American readers will recall, was initially published by Renegade Press. Al pinpoints a problem that has affected the success of graphic novels in bookstores, "The problem has been with the big companies thinking in general that anything over fifty pages is a graphic novel. Unfortunately that's what the mainstream shops have been picking up on. They're not actually seeing anything more to discern the difference. I'm hoping this will change and they'll start looking at individual cases". This is indeed a truism, while super heroes and adventure-based material has a large committed readership, the public at large has other interest.

The Minotaur's Tale continues Al's explorations on the views of disability, but from a fictional reference point. "The whole theme of of the book is using experiences to inspire others to find their own strengths". And that seems an appropriate point to end on, because variety's the spice of life, and whatever the choice, we all want the best out of it.

THE MINOTAUR'S TALE
by Dark Horse International



Getting Into The BUSINESS Of Comics

by Lurene Haines

Part 1: An Overview of The Industry

From a professional standpoint, we're very fortunate to have such a wide and diverse comic market in which to work. As a freelancer, this provides a broad source of publishing houses to choose from, adding variety and generating a satisfying degree of competitiveness.

As of October 1, 1992 there were more than 120 different companies actively soliciting published material. Of those publishers, about 25-30 are well-known. These, of course, include the top five publishers (in ranking order of Dollar Share of the Market as of September 1992) Marvel Comics, Malibu Publishing, D.C. Comics, Dark Horse Comics and Valiant.

Where To Begin

Presumably, you have already taken a stab at producing some sort of sample or work. Either you have had classes and are producing material for scholastic requirements and homework, or you've been working on your own, practicing. With your samples in hand, you're ready to start, but where to begin - who should you approach with your beloved work.

Many newcomers look at the market, and see only the big, high profile companies. But it's important to know a few things before you approach a potential publisher. You need to decide if that publisher is willing to publish you and if they can offer you more than 'just getting published'. Established pros are always hearing,

"I've always wanted to draw/write (fill in the blank with the comic character of your choice)!"

These naive newcomers are certain that by just appearing in an editors office, or confronting a professional at a convention or store appearance with samples in hand will guarantee that they're "discovered."

BZZZZT. I'm sorry, that answer is incorrect.

In actuality, an unsolicited appearance, or putting an editor/professional on the spot is more likely to gain their chagrin. Particularly if the aspiring newcomer fails to follow acceptable form and procedure or if their work is unpolished. And especially, if in combination with those things, the newcomer is an unproven commodity.

An unproven commodity simply means that the publishers generally want a recognizable **Name** - an established or fan-favorite professional - to help sell their books. Now that's not a bad thing, and it's not exclusively the case. But publishing, as we've already said, is a highly competitive business. The top guns are fiercely competing with each other for market share, so anything that will help draw attention to a new book means more sales and a bigger share. That often means using a **Name**.

Soooo, just how did that professional become a **Name**?

Well, it varies from case to case, and depends upon when the professional got into the business. The way things were done twenty years ago contrasts dramatically with what is now accepted form. Many of our new professionals got their break by working hard as assistants to established pros (as in my case) - a variation of schooling and on-the-job-training. Others started in the production or editorial departments and worked their way up.

However, not everybody lives in the city of a publisher or working pro, since the very nature of our business allows for professionals to live wherever they choose, and send in their work.

So given these limitations, how does one get started?

That's where the 'small press' comes in. Many professionals will gladly tell you, almost NOBODY starts at the top. Like anything else in life, there are exceptions to every rule, but very few of these in our own beloved industry. You'll find you're going to have to start humbly and work your way up.

For many folks, humbly means the mailroom at the publisher of your choice. Well, that's all well and good if you're interested in handling mail or if you already happen to live in that publisher's city. However, what humbly means here is a willingness to start small and work your way up. Starting small in the comic industry means that sometimes the opportunity to be published by a lesser-known company can provide you with both exposure, and an opportunity to hone your skills while your work is published (ie. *On The Job Training!*).

Of the 120-plus publishers in our industry, about seventy-five percent of those are small or independent companies. Some got started as vanity press ("I have a comic I want to publish and nobody else wants it, so I'll do it myself!"), some are off-shoots of larger companies ("We are pleased to introduce our Alternative Comics line."), some are foreign press ("Those Americans have no taste in comics, lets show them what *real* comic art looks like - and make some bucks!"), some handle only reprint material ("Well, we've got all these great/lame books around from about insert time span of your choice here years ago, let's sell them to this new audience") and some just pop up ("I've got all this money I inherited/swindled/borrowed, so I think I'll publish comics.") Whatever the reason for their existence, what they represent is a fertile publishing market, and a great selection of publishers to choose from.

For an unproven newcomer still honing their skills, this is very, very, good. These publishers are generally working from a much smaller budget that the 'big guys'. This means, they generally can't afford to hire a **Name** or many **Names**. From an economic viewpoint, that's not great news for an aspiring (and probably starving) professional. But grit your teeth. With a bit of economic sacrifice these smaller publishers can afford a proving ground, exposure to the industry, and best of all sample tearsheets.

On the other hand, many professionals have nothing but glowing words about their economic arrangements with the independents. Some of these independent publishers offer attractive alternative financial agreements including share of profits and substantial royalties instead of up-front page rates. And best of all, creator rights - something the 'big guys' rarely offer (and most assuredly *not* to an unproven newcomer!). The type of financial arrangement you can live with, whether exposure through publishing with that company will benefit you, how badly you want

ProFiles

Professional: Guy Davis, Illustrator
Credits Include: Baker Street, Caliber Press
Current Project: Sandman Series, D.C. Comics
Question: How have the independent publishers affected your comic career?

I worked for the independents for about three years. They *were* my career. They gave me the freedom to go with my own style, to try different things. Right now I'm also doing some work for D.C. Comics.

My experience with the independents has been mixed. Some was real good, some not so great. Caliber was good, but early on I did some projects with some other small companies and it wasn't too pleasant.

to keep the rights to characters your create and just how desperately you want to be published should dictate which publisher(s) you approach.

Some of the better known independent companies include Caliber Press, Eclipse Enterprises, Innovation, Kitchen Sink Press, Now Comics and Tundra Publishing. There is as much variation in their handling of creators, both in terms of rights and financial arrangements, as there is in the types of material they publish. It is up to you as an aspiring professional to inquire into what each company has available should you choose to approach them for work.

The type of material, or genre, published by each company also varies. The two most recognized companies, Marvel and D.C. Comics, tend toward a lineup of popular superhero material. That's not to say these companies avoid different types of material, however they tend to publish 'alternative' works under a different bannerhead (ie. **Epic Comics** for **Marvel**, and **Piranha Press** for **D.C. Comics**). These lines tend to follow the company policy in terms of financial arrangements, but sometimes offer more attractive creator-rights agreements.

The other companies, or independents, publish product that range from conventional superhero to extremely experimental/cutting edge material. Frequently, this variation from the superhero genre is what should most appeals to a newcomer.

Now What Do I Do?

With all this information about money, exposure and genre in mind, you should carefully examine the material published by each company. Spend some time in your local comic stores. Don't stick to just one shop, but look around. The store owners are fans, just like you, and they may have a tendency to order material they prefer, or only titles that are guaranteed hot sellers. If you check across a couple of shops, you're bound to see a wider selection of books, and therefore you'll get a much better idea of what's out there, and with who you'd like to do business.

Don't just look, either. Ask questions. Most shop owners are glad to answer questions, and many are very knowledgeable about the business. Ask if you can look at their distributor order books.

Distributing companies handle the products produced by the publishers. They are the direct contact between the publishers and the stores. They are responsible for providing order forms, processing the orders and shipping the product. The order books, also called catalogues or solicitations, list all the material that is to be printed by every publisher, for the next sales period. There is often a description of the books, and sometimes some artwork samples. This can provide some very useful research information if your local store doesn't order from the more obscure companies.

Check out the comic industry trade publications, too. Our industry plays host to a variety of comics news sources, some of which include this publication, **Comics Arena Magazine**, the well-known weekly paper, **The Comics Buyers Guide**, **Wizard: The Guide To Comics**, and **Comic Shop News**. Each of these publications offers a unique perspective on a variety of areas in the industry, including a good look at what's new from the various publishers. To be a knowledgeable professional (and to give yourself an advantage in doing business in the comics industry) it is in your best interest to read at least a couple of these trade publications regularly.

At this point, you may want to keep a record of information on prospective publishers. This can take the form of a notebook, or card file. Just jot down a few pieces of pertinent information about the specific publishers that interest you. Note the company name and address. List some information about the products; the genre they tend to publish, the style of the product (black and white vs. color, monthly book vs. mini-series, comics vs. graphic novels), the recognizability of talent (ie., do they tend to use '**Names**', etc.), who owns the rights to the characters (listed in the indicia), the average cost of their books, and any other information you think would be important in deciding whether that publisher would be interested in your work.

Now Your Ready To Get Started

Now you're armed with valuable information about your potential employers, and you've gotten a truly professional start on your career. You've done some *research*. You know who is publishing material similar to what

ProFiles

Professional: Scott Hampton, Illustrator
Credits Include: Silverheels Graphic Novel, Eclipse Enterprises; Pigeons From Hell, Eclipse Enterprises
Current Projects: Batman:Nightcries, D.C. Comics; The Upturned Stone, Tundra Publishing
Question: What effect have independent publishers had on your comic career?

The independent publishers, Pacific Comics and Eclipse mostly, allowed me a venue for my own interests and ideas. I got in early, when they were wide open and Marvel and D.C. hadn't yet gotten very far into creator-oriented material.

They often represent a willingness to see you as more than a 'cog in the machine', exclusively aligned with them, and accept you as an independent. They generally respect the idea of being a freelancer a bit more than Marvel and D.C., which, because of their size, have to operate like a corporation. However, in recent years Marvel and D.C. have become much more open to new and experimental ideas, and D.C., in particular, has improved creator contracts tremendously.

My experience with the independents has been generally very good. In any career that spans 10 years, though, there's bound to be ups and downs. In my experience, the down side was their poor cash-flow situation. The up side was that they were generally more enthusiastic about the work, and frequently less intrusive and controlling.

you have to offer, the caliber of work they're publishing, and the types of professionals they hire. If you're interested in working on superhero books, you now have a record of whom to contact. If you want to pursue a character you've created, but don't want to give up your rights, you know which publisher honors creator-rights.

Your next step is to send out requests for submission guidelines.

Submission guidelines let you know the manner and format in which a publisher will consider unsolicited material. Many publishers will not even consider new material unless the samples follow the company guidelines for new submissions. Some companies don't have a structured set of guidelines, so just ask for the editor of new submissions. This way you follow the most efficient company format, and your sample won't sit on a desk at the bottom of somebody's "To Do" pile.

To get the guideline, simply request, in a business-like manner, a copy of "*Insert company name here* submission guidelines." Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (S.A.S.E.) for the reply. Although it's not required, the SASE is a courtesy. Remember, publishers get hundreds of inquiries so set yourself apart as a true professional!

When the guidelines arrive, add the information to your record on the company.

This way you have a log of information to draw on when making your actual submissions - and a way to keep track of whom you've contacted, how you contacted them, and what the response was.

That's the first step in establishing yourself in the industry; investigating and researching who you think are the best publishers to approach. All of this should be done long before you consider *personally* approaching a potential employer and will help prepare you for setting your best, and most impressive, foot forward.

To summarize; you want to **do research** to learn about and know your market, **prepare an organized record** of potential employers, and **send for submissions guidelines** so that you can follow correct procedure when submitting samples. Research, organization and business procedure; three keys to getting started.

Next month we'll look at the next stage of getting started; **Preparing A Professional Portfolio**. We'll consider the types of work you show, the manner in which you present it, where to show it, and how to accept feedback from other professionals gracefully. Meanwhile, start your publisher record and send for the guidelines, so you'll be ready for *Getting Into The Business of Comics*.

Glossary Of Terms

alternative work - comic content that does not tend to follow the established and acceptable superhero format.

creator rights - the right to control the reproduction or publication of a character/concept created by a professional. The degree of control by the publisher can vary, and should be outlined in the contract. Relinquished in all standard work-for-hire agreements.

genre - a class or category of artistic endeavor having a particular form, content or technique. Can mean superhero vs. horror vs. science fiction, or it can mean inked vs. painted, depending on the context of use.

indicia - block of publishing and copyright information that appears in fine print inside published matter. In comics, often found on the bottom portion of the inside cover, front, back or title page.

'Name' - an established or fan-favorite professional

page rate - the price per page paid to a creator for their work. May be paid between ten and thirty days after publisher's receipt of work.

royalties - a percentage of the profits after all expenses have been paid, including company expenses and page rate (generally considered an advance against royalties to come). Generally expressed in percentage form, and usually smaller than share of profits.

sample - A sample of work produced by an artist or writer. Generally used to interest a publisher in employing a professional.

sample tearsheets - copies of published work

share of profits - a portion of the total profits from publication of a book, after production costs have been paid. Generally expressed as a percentage, and in place of an advance page rate.
found in a distributor catalogue, or a publisher flyer.

If you have questions about the topics covered in this column, please feel free to write. I will try to address your questions in the column or by a personal note. Send your letters to **Lurene Haines, c/o Comics Arena Magazine, 264 Main St., Florence, KY 41042**.

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ARENA MAGAZINE

UNLIKELY STORIES

by Steven P. Thompson

DAREDEVIL # 2: THE EVIL MENACE OF ELECTRO by Stan Lee, Joe Orlando and Vince Colletta

"You're just in time! The action and suspense are about to begin within seconds...", or so says the caption in panel one of our story. This is not, however, the grim, gritty, street-wise version of *Daredevil* made popular in recent years by Frank Miller and friends. This issue, although very early in the book's long run, already presents the soap opera background of unrequited love that would carry the book through its early years, reaching a peak with the ultra-realistic art of Gene Colan around 1967 and the triple identity sub-plot featuring "Mike" Murdock. But that's a tory and this issue is unlikely enough taken on its own.

First up, we have Ben Grimm, the ever-lovin' blue-eyed Thing, from the Fantastic Four, dropping by the offices of Nelson and Murdock, Attorneys-at-Law, to have them check out their new lease on the Baxter Building before they sign it. As shown here, Grimm is uncharacteristically egotistical, chiding Foggy Nelson for not wanting his autograph and pointing out that the FF were on their way to Washington, D.C. to "get another medal for our pink little hope chests!" On top of this, he breaks the office door in two when he comes in. Not to worry, however, as the powerful hero simply forces the two pieces of the apparently metal door back together.

"Instant welding," he calls it. Never mind that he makes no visible effort to reattach the door to its hinges. (Where's Damage Control when you really need them?) No problems with the door on the way out, though. Seems that the FantastiCar is hovering directly outside the law office window trying to avoid getting tangled up in telephone wires. Sue makes note of secretary Karen Page's "attractive hairdo" as the Thing climbs out into the FF vehicle which seems to have attracted some attention as the next panel shows tickertape wafting through the city skies as Reed tells Johnny to wave to the crowds.

Meanwhile, Daredevil, wearing his original yellow, black and red costume and carrying a full size cane(a nonetoo-subtle wink at his being a blind man in his civilian identity), is busy rousting a car theft ring being run by Spider-Man's old foe, Electro. You'll remember Electro's nifty lightning bolt mask, here drawn with its points going up, down or sideways from one panel to the next. Anyway, he's off somewhere else as DD corrals his gang by using a rubber tire to slingshot a car engine into their oncoming truck!

Seeing on TV that the Fantastic Four are going to be out of town, our arch villain decides to break into their headquarters and steal their scientific secrets to sell to whichever foreign power is willing to pay for them. A real patriot, this guy.

DD, himself, is lamenting that "Breaking up stolencar gangs is too simple for someone with my powers! I almost wish I had a more difficult challenge to face! Oh, well, maybe someday..." A bit of foreshadowing there.

Electro easily breaks into the FF's skyscraper headquarters. Clearly, this is the reason for Mr. Fantastic's overkill security devices in later years. By the time Matt Murdock reaches the building to check out the lease (why the Thing couldn't have just left it at the office is never stated)," ...his super sharp senses react to a feeling of danger ..." so he puts on his work clothes. Since when does Daredevil have "Spider-Sense"?

In this case, he's right to worry, though, as Electro takes him out in just over a page, tosses him into one of the fabulous foursome's ever present rocket-ships (never know when you might need to take a quick jaunt to the Skrull galaxy) and launches it into outer space!

No problem, though, as our amazing hero uses his ultra-sharp senses to guide the

giant rocket to a safe crash landing in an open area of Central Park where he can't hear any human heartbeats. Escaping from the curious police, he uses his cane to hitch a ride on a helicopter that just happens to be flying over the Baxter Building and gracefully drops in through the skylight.

By this time, Electro has used the heat generated from his electrical bolts to melt(!) through the FF's safe and has a small file that he seems to think contains all of Reed Richard's scientific secrets. Obviously, he's never read their own title.

Escaping Daredevil on the first try by similarly melting through an elevator door (while running toward it), a four page chase ensues, ending in a theater where policemen shortcircuit Electro by turning a firehose on him.

All that remains is for DD to personally weld the FF's safe back together. In the end, the Fantastic Four decide not to hire Matt since he never found the time to look at their lease while they were out of town (a fact later forgotten as the FF regularly refer to Murdock as their attorney over the years).

This story, written by an already overworked Stan Lee, features art by legendary EC Science-Fiction artist, Joe Orlando, inked by the late (and much maligned) Vince Colletta. While Colletta often brought a needed softening effect to some of the artists whose pencils he inked over the years, his thin, sometimes scratchy lines don't really work with Orlando's art.

One bit of exceptional art appears in the panels set on board the rocket-ship. These look uncannily like EC panels turned out by Orlando and his erstwhile mentor/partner Wallace Wood a full ten years earlier. Another bit of foreshadowing: Orlando wouldn't really make much of an impact on DAREDEVIL but, here still a few issues away, Wally would.

END

TEMPERED STEELE
Bob Hickey, Dan Hillsman and Chris Leidenfrost

TALISLANTA: RUNE
Stephan M. Sechi and Ron Spencer

RACE DANGER
Bob Hickey, Dan Lauer and Chris Leidenfrost

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RICK McCOLLUM
Speaks Freely

An interview by Joe Martin (accompanied by Tony Parsons and Dwayne Haddix)

We were to meet Rick at Steak & Ale. It turned out to be *Steak & Egg*. We sat and talked for over three hours and discovered when we departed that we had left the tape recorder as a tip. Oops! It took two days before we could get it back from the reluctant manager who had locked it in the office. But, we did get it back, and here's what it said...

"You started reading comics as a fan, right?"

"I read comics ever since I was a little boy in the late '60s, I always wanted to draw 'em. I did like everyone else, drew on my notebook, drew on the desk, y'know. I didn't like the art teacher, I thought he was an ass. I took mechanical drawing and drafting for three years. That helped me with comic book drawing, particularly line weight and tight control. Went to U.C. (University of Cincinnati), majored in Fine Art, I did rock & roll art as a senior for some company..."

"And all this time you wanted to be a comic book artist?"

"I wanted to! But, I think the wisest thing I did, though, is that when I was a junior I said 'to hell with it' and I completely forgot about comics and concentrated more on my painting and drawing fine art style. Learning how to draw people, learning how to paint, and then when I came back in to drawing comics I had more of a foundation to go by. Instead of learning to draw from Jack Kirby or Jim Steranko, I learned by drawing the same naked woman for five years straight, and things of that nature."

"So, you learned from a much more technical yet expressionist end?"

"Well, anyone can learn to draw muscles and monsters but can you draw Clark Kent

sitting on his desk watching Lois Lane cross the hall in perspective? If you can do that then you can draw muscles and monsters and spaceships."

"Did you submit to a bunch of different companies?"

"I worked in mini-comics and fanzines back when mini-comics were starting in the late '70s and early '80s and xeroxing became affordable all of a sudden. I just started doing my own. God, I did hundreds of pages of mini-comics! That's where I met a lot of people, too. I met Grant Foster, Willie Peppers, Bill Anderson... Bill had inked a lot of my stuff. He wrote me once and said, 'Oh, I liked your comic, can I ink it?' I figured, 'What the hell, sure' and I sent him some drawings to ink and it turns out he was a teenager in high school still and he was doing these in study hall and I was out of college by that time(laughs)! I mean, I sent him some really hard core stuff and he was hiding it in study hall, y'know, inking it here and there.

"But I just kept working in art but I never really did submit anything because, working in commercial art, I knew that submitting by mail was a dead end. Rarely will you ever get hired by submitting through the mail. Y'gotta meet these guys face-to-face. It's like you got to sell yourself as an individual and, although it's unfair, your talent is really secondary as far as making these guys know you. You can be the greatest comic book artist in the world but if the editor think's you're a goon, forget it."

"When did the professional career begin?"

"Oh, it started with the black & white explosion in the mid to late '80s right after the Turtles took over, I think. I just started answering ads in the *Buyer's Guide* and sending copies to everyone. I hooked up with this group called Pyramid Comics and they were fairly big but big went bust just like everyone else did back then. I did six or seven books for

them and they actually sold fairly well and I got paid and, hey, it was fun, but then a lot of distributors went under and they killed that. The black & white explosion wasn't killed by crappy comics, it was killed by bad distribution deals and distributors going under and not paying a lot of money that was owed out. This particular distributor was behind a lot of distributors going under. It was very shifty, set up like 'dummy corporations' and it was just bad news all the way around. Pyramid lost a lot of bucks. They're still around though. Mark Pannicia puts out stuff under, I guess it's Acid Rain Studios, now."

"Yeah! I know who Mark is!"

"You do? Aw, well he's a goofball (laughs). I mean that in a good way, Mark! He's a good guy.

"But, uh, I also worked for another black & white company called White Wolf, which isn't associated with the gaming White Wolf, that's a separate company. They were doing sword and sorcery stuff and I did the first issue of their book called *Dark Regions*. It was a rush job and I was still learning my craft and it could have been better. I did pencils on the second issue and this was right at the time that they kept wanting to up the frequency but I was told in the beginning bi-monthly because I was doing these other books and then they said 'Monthly!' and I was like 'Okay, I'll get an inker.' Well, they got this guy who was like their buddy from high school and it was pure crap so I just withdrew that and I quit and since they got mad at me for quitting they stiffed me and didn't pay so $@*% you, y'know."

"At the same time, Bill Anderson was still inking my stuff and he had gone on to become a professional. He had worked for Marvel on *Spider-Man* and DC on *Justice League* and Comico... this was the first incarnation of Comico. I did a short piece for them which Bill inked and it was received fairly well. Then they were going on about we'll do this and that and it was all talk and no action, so they got their own 'just desserts' and they went under.

"Then, Bill got some money together and we put out a single issue of a magazine called *Horde*, it was an anthology fantasy magazine that I wrote and pencilled and Bill inked it. It did well for all the distributors who carried it but it was a book that Diamond refused to carry because it wasn't a 'comic book', so immediately we lost half the market. We had the second issue almost ready to go but by the time the runs came in Bill was pretty hot because he was paying for it all so that died. Thank you very much, Diamond. But, on the other hand, we had loads of this book to hand out and say, 'Hey, look what we can do!' and at the same time Bill kept getting other jobs, *Elementals* and some of the new Comico stuff and various other companies. He was at a convention and showed our stuff to Kevin Eastman because he shows our stuff to everybody and Kevin was looking for new artists because he wasn't involved as much with the Turtle stuff. He was getting ready to start up Tundra and Peter was off apparently enjoying himself (laughter). Bill said, 'Rick writes, too' and Kevin told him to have me write up a 5-page script and they may use it for their anthology *Turtle Soup*, which was in the planning

stage. But, in cases like that, I don't believe in writing just one script because the answer is just yes or no... I submitted *three* stories. To my intense delight, Kevin said, 'Do all of them!' So, I pencilled those up and turned them in. Almost a year goes by and once again he and Bill run into each other at a convention. Kevin was like, 'We're looking for someone for the Turtles book' and Bill was like, 'Well, look what Rick did!' and Kevin says, 'Oh! Okay! Have him write me a full-length script!'. I submitted *two* scripts. He says, 'Do them both!' At the same convention, Kevin was in the Tundra booth and they were just a couple of months old and Bill presented him with another of our projects, the *Screaming Masks* stuff. He was like, 'Go with it!' Oh, okay great.

"I met Kevin, and I have nothing but good things to say about Kevin. You hear things about Tundra and stuff but Kevin has always been fair, he's always been honest. He has helped me on a personal basis, a great attitude and money has not gone to his head whatsoever. He's not pretentious. He's just a nice guy all the way around. Nothing but high marks for Kevin. I talked to him and got to know him.

"Tundra flew me out to their headquarters and we signed all the papers, y'know. It was a real kick. It was a real nice building, ultra-modern like *S.H.I.E.L.D. Headquarters* or something (laughs), original art on the walls like Corben and Barry Smith. It was like comic book heaven. So, I met all the people, very nice, and I talked to Kevin and he said to do the *Turtles* books first, they were priority, and I did them. Then, I started working on *Screaming Masks* and it was to be volume six in the *Sketchbook* series. Got all that together. Did the paintings, wrote the text and that's when I started running into problems. I was cranking out these pages like a mad dog! I worked until midnight every night and Bill really let me down. He dropped the ball and just wasn't getting stuff done. My mistake was talking to him and not to Tundra directly. He was like, 'yeah, it's getting done. No problem!' I had over 150 pages of this damn book done, full bleed, y'know, everything and Bill had just turned in the first issue!"

"Oh, man!"

"Yeah, tell me about it! Anyway, Tundra axed the book. They were in this recession period and they axed like twenty titles within three weeks. I couldn't freakin' believe it! I *&%# a brick! I called Bill immediately and it was like, 'Bill's asleep' and I'm like, 'Get Him Up.' What it boils down to is like I said, Bill just dropped the ball. I was very angry. He offered no excuses, no nothing, he was just very contrite and was like, 'Well...'. And, you see, it was like a domino-effect because he not only screwed me out of major bucks, our letterer in Los Angeles got screwed, David Butterfield, who helped me co-write some of the stuff was out, I'm talking like, mega-thousands of dollars here. But, to Kevin's

credit, I got on the phone, and this is what I'm talking about here, he was very nice and he said that they would try and do it as a black & white. Okay. So, I told Bill I'd ink it myself and that was that, and of course Tundra was in a recession and they were just looking into breaking even in printing and at that time a lot of their books were being printed in Japan because of cost economics and what not. Tundra was very good to me in that they showed me their wrist, they showed me their books and, as of July, which was the last time I talked to them and seen any paperwork from them, none of their books are making a profit! I mean stuff by even Moebius and Bissette's *Taboo* were off like thousands of copies from breaking even. But Kevin was great and he even paid me for the stuff that was cancelled! This guy has money to shake off trees! But he was very cool, not like most editors who would just say, 'Screw you', y'know."

"What a tough market, though."

"Yes, incredibly. But I can't bitch at Tundra."

"Let's talk about your current projects."

"Well, after that I pouted for a few months (laughs). I didn't go to cons. I just turned down all convention appearances because I was so pissed off."

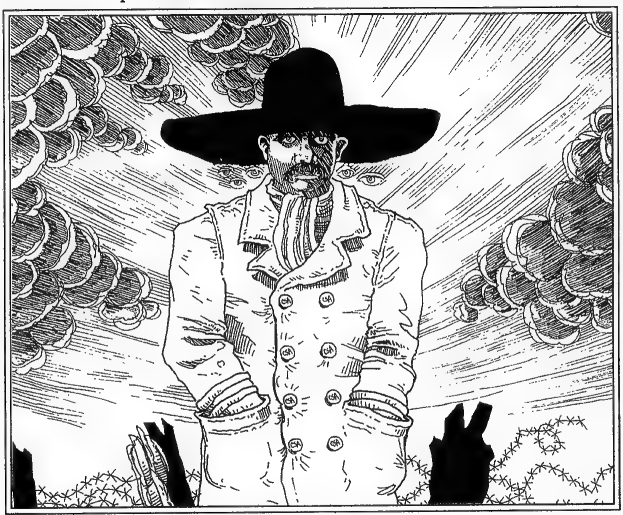
"This was all rather recent I take it."

"Yeah, the Tundra thing happened like in April of this year. But, hey, Mirage still sent me free Turtles books so I had something to read, y'know (laughs). So, I started just answering ads again and I've been talking to Mirage and Michael Dooney because I've been wanting to do a horror thing and so does he but we just haven't been able to get it together. I sent in a synopsis script for *Plastron Cafe*. They also sent me a script but it just wasn't what I wanted to do but I very much appreciated that they would offer me that.

"But, as you know, I've always been a Robert E. Howard fan and I saw an ad in the *Buyer's Guide* saying, 'reliable artist Please!' (laughs). It was for Conquest Press and the guy's name was Alfonso Alfonso (laughs again)."

"That's his name?"

"Yeah! Alfonso Alfonso!



Interview

He's in Florida and, uh, somehow he coughed up part of his soul and acquired the rights to loads of Robert E. Howard stories. Not the Conan or Kull stuff but the westerns and detectives and 'weird menace' stories, the kind of Fu Manchu, oriental stuff and lurking in the shadows stuff. He'd been trying to release them over the years."

"As comics?"

"Yeah, as comic adaptations, and they flopped. They just fell on their face miserably and the way I see it is he was releasing this stuff as 'westerns' and 'detectives' and that was the wrong way to go about it. You don't want to emphasize that it's a western or detective. You want to emphasize that it is Robert E. Howard(!!) in big, bold letters because you want to pull in all the Conan fans. So, I wrote up a prospectus on how I would market all the stuff and instead of Savage Six Guns it would be Robert E. Howard's *Blood and Thunder!* Well, he went for it and so we're doing a Robert E. Howard book."

"So, you've been working on that?"

"Yes. He had various scripts done by people and he gave them to me to adapt as I saw fit. I've done the first one which is 'Lawshooters of Cowtown' which is the stuff you guys got and it is incredibly, incredibly savage Howard western stuff... loads of fun to draw. I'm also throwing in a thing about the 'Life of Robert E. Howard'."

"You've really researched that."

"Well, I'm having a lot of fun with it because people should know that Howard's life was nearly as bizarre as his stories! He's a fascinating individual. He believed in reincarnation very much, he believed he was reincarnated and there's so many myths going around about this man due mostly to the Marvel Comics version and it's interesting to get a new point of view. Everyone says he killed himself because his mother died but I believe the reverse is true. His mother being sick is what kept him alive because he felt obligated to take care of her. He probably would have killed himself ten years earlier because if you look through his writings, I have many of his books at home and many personal letters, graphical stuff about Howard the man as opposed to his fictional stories, he always had a really morbid fascination with suicide. He probably would have killed himself after his beloved dog, Patch, died. That was hard for him and he just wasn't really into living. He felt very scorned by the people around him. Cross Plains was kind of a 'redneck hell' type Texas kind of thing. Yee-haw, y'know. And everyone was real down on him because he was a writer and everyone else was like an oil rigger or something.

"Plus, I do think Howard had some undiagnosed mental problems. He was probably a bipolar schizophrenic in my point of view because he did such odd things. I have either been fortunate enough or unfortunate enough in your own point of view to have known several mentally ill people in my life and once I began reading about the man I perceived some very acute similarities. He'd be walking down the street and he would be talking to himself and he'd be so paranoid that he'd be looking behind every rock and behind every tree and stuff. People would cross the street just so they wouldn't walk by him because he was a

huge, intimidating man. He was sickly as a child but he intensely built himself up. He was literally a Conan, muscle-type fellow. He had like an 18-inch neck and he used to box. Him and his friends use to do amateur boxing and they didn't hate each other, they'd just go behind the building and beat the living crap out of one another and just, y'know, learn how to do it. They'd come out with black eyes and bloody noses and they'd do this day in and day out! That and with his predilection for weapons and things, I can see how he would raise the hackles of Ma and Pa Kent walking down the street (laughs). Something else you don't know is that he lived with his parents, much older people, and his mother was sickly and his father was decrepit and it was your typical farm-thing where they're sitting in their living room and Howard, when he wrote his stories, dictated them and re-enacted them at the top of his lungs! Visitors would see his parents in the living room, y'know, 'yes,ma' and 'yes,pa' and in the background you'd hear this booming voice screaming, '...And then Conan smashed his head in!'. And you could hear it echoing all throughout the farm. Totally surreal."

"Gosh. So, you've learned a lot about Howard the man?"

"Fortunately, also, there is a woman by the name of Novalyn Ellis Price, an old and very nice lady who lives in Louisiana, and it turns out that she was Robert E. Howard's girlfriend up until the time he killed himself. She wrote up her memoirs about Howard a couple years ago in book form with first-hand accounts of this guy. She could say, 'Yes, he did this and he believed this and no, that's a myth' and so on. And she would know. It's kind of sad because she broke up with him and he killed himself shortly thereafter, a year or so, I believe. But she's still alive, happily married and still tottering around and I guess the rambling point is that there's a lot about Robert E. Howard that isn't known which is just coming out so with the back up in *Blood and Thunder* with the extrapolations about Howard..."

"Readers can gather some interesting insights. Does it take a madman to create such a great and timeless character?"

"Possibly. L. Sprague de Camp, who writes Conan stories, and is a really nice man, has been criticized that, 'Oh, well, you don't write like Howard!' and he's like, 'Look. I can't write like Howard. Howard was crazy. I'm not.' So, possibly. It's not fair to expect Sprague to write like Howard because Howard was crazy. Sprague's not."

"And with that said, we're going to wrap this up. Any additional comments?"

"Conquest Press, *Blood and Thunder*, first issue out near the end of December, bi-monthly, first issue is 'Lawshooters of Cowtown' which is a savage western adventure and the second issue is 'Names in the Black Book' which is weird menace Fu Manchu-type stuff with an oriental villain, Erlik Khan. Very Thugee, knife in the back, monsters in the shadows and, of course, very bloody and violent. The next issues are tentative because there is so much to choose from. But we've got tons of stuff.

"And remember, the Marvel version of Howard is just one version, and not necessarily the fully correct one."

"So, if you want to know more about Robert E. Howard and get a great dose of action, read..."

"Robert E. Howard's *Blood and Thunder!*"

PREVIEW

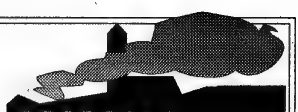
GARETH BLACKMORE'S UNUSUAL TALES

Factual Illusion by Kyle Hotz & Dan Debono

Published by Blackmore Publishing

"BANZAI-A-BOMB..."
"MY KINDA PLACE!"
"HAH! SHOULD'VE CAN HELP..."
"I'M WAY BEYOND MORTAL DIRECTIVES."
I'M LOOKING FOR A WOMAN... AN BEAUTIFUL WOMAN...
AIN'T WE ALL, BUDDY?
EXCUSE ME, ARE YOU DAVE?
I COULD HAVE A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, IF I ONLY HAD MORE COURAGE!
"MY BROTHER WORKS YOU, DAVE..."
"SHE'S JUST LIKE TILLMAN DESCRIBED."
"AND LIKE TILLMAN DESCRIBED."
"I'M A SELF MADE GUY. I DON'T NEED HIS CRAP!"
"SHE! I'M SUN PAISON, I KNOW YOU!"
"I'LL BE GENEROUS."
"I'M A SELF MADE GUY. I HAVE MONEY..."
"I WON'T BUY!"
"WELL, THIS SURPRISE!"
"GOOD! THEN LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS!"
"HEY, POSSIBLY SOME PLEASURE..."
"WHAT?"
"WOW!"
"GORGEOUS!"
"HALLEY! IT'S ME... SALA HERE... I'M HOME!"
"WAITING HOW WAY THROUGH A MYRIAD DIMENSIONS, SALA HAD IMMEDIATELY LOST HIS PURSUERS."
"HOW, USE YOUR MATERIAL WEAPONS TO BREAK THESE SHACKLES. DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME... I'LL BE FINE."
"ANYBODY CAN TALK TO TREVAL. GET YOU OUT!"
"DON'T BE A FOOL! THEY WILL KILL YOU... YOU ARE ALREADY ILLUMED."
"NOW! SHOOT HIM SAVAGE!"
"PLEASE HELP ME. SOON WHAT THEY HAVE DONE TO ME. THEY'VE MADE ME A MONSTER!"
"SOMETHING IS JUST NOT RIGHT. BUT MYANA COULDN'T HAVE BEEN LYING..."
"MARKED BY BEAUTY, HE MAKES THE WRONG DECISION."
TO BE CONTINUED

Industry News

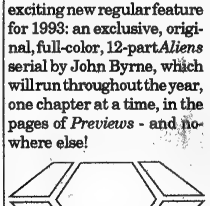


Diamond News

Diamond Previews is #1 (Again)

In the wake of major changes in its look, staff, and editorial direction, Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc. the world's largest and undisputed Direct Market distributor, promises to deliver exactly what one would expect from their monthly catalogue, *Previews*: complete advance information on upcoming releases, convenient forms for ordering merchandise, and a bounty of regular features, collectible premiums, and special surprises - many of which are available nowhere else.

In late 1991, *Previews* took the first step towards becoming more than a catalog when it presented its first creator interview with the legendary John Byrne (*Next Men, 2112*). It seems only apropos, then, that Byrne - and Dark Horse Comics - be on hand once again as *Previews* launches a new year with an exciting new regular feature for 1993: an exclusive, original, full-color, 12-part *Aliens* serial by John Byrne, which will run throughout the year, one chapter at a time, in the pages of *Previews* - and nowhere else!



Marvel News

X-Men Pull Off Nielsen Miracle

Mirroring the indisputable dominance they consistently demonstrate in comic book sales, the *X-Men* have emerged from their series television debut as A.R. Nielsen's highest rated Saturday morning program on all the networks among viewers 6 to 17. The two-part (Oct. 31st and Nov. 7th) sneak preview of their new animated series - which Fox Children's Network (FCN) rolls out weekly this January in the coveted 11:00 AM (E.S.T.) time period - was nothing less than a Nielsen miracle among male teens, scoring an unprecedented 9.5 rating/ 44 share.

"It's incredibly rare to preview a Saturday morning series to so large an audience, and we couldn't be more delighted," said Margaret Loesch, FCN president. "We're particularly excited by the significant increase in viewership of Part II over Part I - a definite indication that momentum is escalating."

When the Saturday morning series officially debuts on January 9th, 1993, it will be on the heels of extensive promotion, both on-air and throughout the 4.7 million member Fox Kids Club and its official publication will feature the *X-Men* on its next cover. More support comes from a national promotion at all McDonald's restaurants where kids are asked to vote for their favorite FCN series. Also planned sometime during the holiday season is a one-hour *X-Men* special re-broadcasting the highly successful two-part sneak preview which was dubbed best new Saturday morning cartoon by *People* magazine (Nov. 16th, 1992).

The *X-Men*, the most popular team of characters in comic books today with annual sales in excess of fifty million copies, are a group of young people born with parahuman abilities - some physical, some psychic - which render them outcasts from society. They find an ally in Professor Charles Xavier, the head of the School for Gifted Youngsters whose goal is to mainstream the *X-Men* while protecting the world from mutants who abuse their powers. Tales of the *X-men* exploring themes of prejudice and diversity have garnered legions of loyal readers over the years, many of whom read all nine monthly *X-Men* titles. The newest entry is *X-Men Adventures*, an adaptation of the *X-Men* television series on Fox.

Marvel News

Marketshare Increase Behind Venom, 2099

Marvel's product offerings muscled out all other publishers' big hits, as Marvel's

marketshare increased 9.71% in December.

Total pre-orders on *Venom #1* are estimated at over 1.4 million in the Direct Market, with the title topping Diamond Comics' Previews Top 250 Comics List in both units and dollars ordered. *Punisher 2099 #1* debuted as the third best-selling book of the month. Orders continue to be strong on all Marvel's X titles, as they build to the special storyline coming up in three months. At a $5.95 cover price, orders on *Incredible Hulk: Future Imperfect #1* were slightly lower than expected, but with the creative team of Peter David and George Perez, this first issue is most likely under-ordered. Overall, Marvel captured 6 out of the top 10 spots, and 32 out of the top 50.

Image News

Going Solo

Image Comics has expanded its role in comics publishing by bringing in-house all aspects of production including marketing, distribution and finance announced interim chief, Cheri Liefeld.

When Image Comics was created a year ago, the seven founding partners signed with Malibu Comics for their initial product distribution and marketing. When all books ship in March 1993, just one year after its inception, Image will become a separate entity, performing all the functions of a full service comic book company. Comic marketshare ranks Malibu as the third largest publisher in the industry for December with the Image line included. Once the switch is made, it is predicted that Image will become the third largest comic book publisher, with a marketshare of nearly 12% while Malibu will drop to but a .81%, a significant drop for that company.

"Malibu played an integral role in helping Image set up shop," stated Cheri Liefeld. "Image is now ready to run with the ball itself and wishes Malibu the best success in its continuing endeavors."

Image, who shook up the comic world last year by luring away seven super-star whose pens accounted for many of the biggest selling comics ever at industry giant Marvel, has garnered accolades for its highly successful and innovative new comics: *Youngblood, WildC.A.T.S., Spawn, Brigade,* and *Shadowhawk*. The Image creators - composed of Rob Liefeld, Jim Lee, Todd McFarlane, Marc Silvestri, Jim Valentino, Erik Larsen and Whilce Portacio - have gone on to sell some of the highest selling comics in Direct Market history.

The focus of the new company will remain fan-oriented while creating new departments in the areas of promotion, distribution and finance. Cheri Liefeld will be overseeing the transition.

In a joint statement, the company's principals emphasized that, Image Comics will continue producing the high quality product that fans have come to expect from them. "Assuming the position of publisher will allow Image to be more directly involved in every aspect of the books promotion and marketing," offers Rob Liefeld "which we feel is key to Image's continuing success - we have some very exciting things coming in '93."

"This is the natural evolution of our departure from Marvel," says Jim Lee. "Now, we not only own our characters, we get to control the destiny of the company we created as well. I am excited by the new venture. It gives us the ability to promote and publish other creator-owned titles and to oversee the entire creative and marketing aspects."

Todd McFarlane agrees, "Will this change Image? Yes! 1992 was just a start, in 1993 we will be in high octane."

Image plans to double its comic output in 1993 adding several new additions to their already successful line as well as creating numerous spin-offs from their "hot" existing comics.

In other news, Image said that Creative Artists Agency Inc. (CAA) will represent the artists and their properties for movie and licensing deals, with several projects reportedly already in the works. Image will also be launching a toy-line based on one of its existing titles in the near future. In addition, 1993 will see Image venture into the foreign market with its entire line of comics being reprinted throughout Europe.

GAMING

The Gaming Fool's Review

by Tony Parsons

Vampire: The Masquerade & Werewolf: The Apocalypse

by White Wolf Games

Welcome to another consequential yet action-packed review from the Gaming Fool! I shall gift you with a frightening tale of my latest exploits, as always. One misty eve, I found myself in strange company with Dan "Big Guy" Hancock, Ivan Joe Yucky Martin, and Dwayne "Big Red Antics" Haddix.. In our travels from this place to that, we had crossed into a dark and eerie zone where ghostly moans and screams echoed through the air. Don't ask how we got in this predicament. It happened ever so suddenly.

The Scene - Big Red almost trampled an unsuspecting and sobbing young man who crouched, fetal-like, upon the moist and misty ground. I questioned, "Ho there and forsooth! What is the trouble, oh lamenting and nearly trampled one?" The youth fixed a sad gaze upon me, eyes pleading, and spoke to me of a horrific tale. It came to pass his bride-to-be was abducted by a fiendish creature of the Undead. Quickly, my mind raced and deduced a most horrible conclusion. Aye, I had concluded that only one thing was evil enough to enact this hideous crime. It could only be... a Vampire! I notified the young lad that the beast must dwell in the abandoned mausoleum a few miles from the town. With a swift turn and a surly grin, my companions and I thrashed out with immodest enthusiasm the dangers of the perilous task of retrieving the fair damsel and destroying the count.

The Approach - Lickety-split, we assembled sufficient equipment for this endeavor! Our supplies included wooden stakes, sabres wisely purchased from *Museum Replicas Inc.* (guffaw), torches, and our favorite copies of *Arena Magazine*. We launched into the dank and grotesquerie graveyard. Our nerves were set on edge as we delved within the musty catacomb and our blood froze, save mine of course, as we suddenly discerned the sobbing pleas of a woman and the eerily resounding replies of her physically impoverishing captor. My soul could stand the suffering no longer! I sprang with a zealous roar, "Unhand the girl and prepare for the Abyss from whence you came, loathsome denizen!"

The Assault - The Vampire's retort emanated as a snarling attack. My companions rushed to aid in the struggle! Unwillingly, Big Red accepted a blow to his head and Big Guy was flung soundly against the stone wall. Within seconds, only Ivan Joe, holding his Celtic Cross aloft, and myself, sabre and stake in hand, remained to combat the creature. A lengthy deadlock ensued until finally I tired and spun in a blurring motion. Simultaneously, I impaled the beast with a stake and decapitated him with my blade.

The Conclusion - I rushed to the girl, as Joe stood awestruck, and examined her. "Praise the gods!" I cried aloud, "She is unharmed!" Joe checked upon our fallen comrades, just unconcious(whew) and, needless to say, we returned the woman to her lover and soon they were married. Truly, it was a grand celebration and our praises were sung throughout the night. Indeed, another glorious victory for the GAMING FOOL!

Okay, okay! The Review - By now, you must be wondering "Where the heck is all this leading to?" Well, my friends, it is leading to a review of White Wolf's game *Vampire: The Masquerade* and its sister game *Werewolf: The Apocalypse*. Two games set in the dark and gothic motif of the undead and the unnatural. These games can be played individually or together. My opinion, which is the best, is to play them together, since they are complimentary of one another. I say this because it provides more playable scenarios and a wider variety of ideas and characters. The system of these games may, at first glance, appear complex but, in truth, they are not. With a smidgen of thought and some careful reading, you'll find the system is considerably simple. Combat and skill checks require the use of ten sided die which are used in "dice pools". Dice pools are the number of dice that a character uses when performing any action. These rolls are checked against a difficulty rating set by the Storyteller

(Gamesmaster). The number of successes you achieve, the better the results. Do **not** just jump into the game. Like I said, read the books (they're incredibly interesting) and make sure you comprehend the system. Character creation is easy and the games offer a wide variety of character types to choose from. And remember that Vampires and Werewolves increase in power over time and with usage of their skills. With age comes power.

You might be wondering, "What, Oh Mighty Gaming Fool, are the purposes of these games? Am I to just run around sucking blood or ripping humans to bits?"

I say to thee, "NAY! and nay again!" These games involve stories. A character's Chronicle tells the tale of his life. As a Vampire or Werewolf, you must decide what your place is in society, how you react to it, how it treats you and so forth. You are in constant danger as well as a constant threat. There are Hunters and hidden wars, magic and other undead that consistently envelope you and barrage you. You'll prey on and fight against mortals as well as others of your ilk. Vampires and Werewolves react curiously with each other and you must interpret them as coinciding or opposing ideas. You would be right on both "counts", of course, but I feel that we need to discuss each game separately.

Vampire: the Masquerade is not your run-of-the-mill Vampire game. In it, you are part of a society of *Kindred*. Wrested viciously from humanity's familiar embrace, you're character is imparted with the Gift

(or curse) of immortal life. Normally, you belong to a clan of other Vampires that share your ideas and goals and wish to increase the strength of your sect in the society of the Vampire. Make no mistake! You are a dark creature that feeds upon the blood of the living. "The blood is the life," and this is the burden of your existence. The question: you, as the player, must ask and answer how will you use your powers? Will you be the scourge of the underworld? A hunter of your Vampiric kin? Will you be the evil and sinsister force that preys upon the fears of mortals in the night? This game is a wonderful relief to the fantasy setting, if you seek such an escape.

Werewolf: The Apocalypse follows the path of its sibling. In it you are a *Garou*, protector of the Mother spirit, Gaia. You are the warriors of the earth which, over time, has been corrupted by man, a witless follower of the ancient and evil spirit known as the Wyrm. You must pick a tribe to which you belong and fight to the finish to save the earth from destruction. Whereas you are not an evil beast, you do see the humans as destroyers and enemies of the true ways and it is your duty to stop them. Be on the watch! The Wyrm has many minions. Some of your own kind have been corrupted and twisted by its evil power. Certain Garou believe that the Vampire is a pawn of the Wyrm for they promote expansion of cities and destruction of nature to satisfy their wicked intentions. Thus, animosity is bred. However, there are instances where both can benefit from aiding each other. It is not unheard of for Vampires and Werewolves to work together. This system eliminates the age-old ideal of the lycanthrope, and bestows an innovative brilliance unto them. The main question is, "When will you Rage?!"

I have instilled within your mind an excellent overview of the ideals and systems of both games. I shan't expose everything because I feel that large amounts of enjoyment comes from reading the books. You will find that these rule books are full of interesting ideas and stories. Not to mention groovy quotes from many famous people and musical and literary groups.

Interest Level

Playability

Originality

Fun Level

Here ends another enlightening review. Until next time, I wish only the happiest and sunniest of days find you and, maintain thyself! When the sun goes down, look over your shoulder, have faith and grip your cross ever so tightly.

Good Travels and Happy Dreams from...

Tony Parsons
"The Gaming Fool"

GAMING NEWS

Citadel/ Games Workshop News

Due to a good deal with Diamond Comics Distributors, Inc., the re-emergence of Games Workshop and Citadel Miniatures is becoming better available to collectors. Diamond is working very closely with the staff at Games Workshop of Baltimore in listing the newest releases and the best-selling back-stock available in their catalogue, *Previews*.

Starting with the December issue of *Previews*, the last few months of new releases from Games Workshop will be listed, as well as the product due to release in February. Furthermore, a back-stock listing will appear in *Previews* of many Games Workshop and Citadel Miniatures products that is recommended stock. This comprises the best selling products for GW's three main product lines, *Warhammer Fantasy, Space Marine* and *Warhammer 40,000* as well as many other popular titles such as *Talisman, Warhammer Fantasy Role-Play* and more. Don't miss out on one of the best selling game lines available today.

GDW News

GDW's latest boardgame release is *Phase Line Smash*, a solitaire game that is the product of hours of detailed research of the Gulf War. This is a game of ground operations in Operation Desert Storm. It puts the player(s) in control of the U.S. VII Corps for its "left hook" through the desert to destroy the Iraqi Republican Guard.

This is not an easy game to win. Ever since the war was brought to its dramatically successful conclusion, it has become easy to think of that victory as a foregone conclusion, as if the Coalition could have done it with its hands tied behind its back. *Phase Line Smash* is intended to demonstrate that nothing could be further from the truth. This game is intended to be a challenge.

Phase Line Smash retails for $30.

Mayfair News

New Products

The second product in the *Demons* line, Mayfair's newly announced *Role-Aids* subset, *Denizens of Vecheron* contains 69 loose-leaf, 5-hole punched pages of "Who's Who" in new monsters from the demiplane of Vecheron, including complete entries for the Marshals, Governors and Generals of the Prince of Betrayal and a summary of the various Thanes and Lieutenants who serve them. *Denizens of Vecheron* expands on the material presented in the Demons sourcepack but can also be used as a stand alone supplement for any role-playing campaign.

This book will be followed in 1993 by *Angels: Divine Retribution*, and completed with *Demons II: The Retaliation*. Since *Role-Aids* easily adapts to practically any system - including AD&D - this book should be a big seller. *Denizens of Vecheron* is priced at only $11 and it ships in January from Mayfair Games.

Also from Mayfair, check out the *Chill Softcover*. That's right! It's finally here. This version of the *Chill* rulebook features a soft cover and a lower price point for those role-players who want a "cheaper thrill."

For $20, it will ship in January.

Pushed Back for Role-Aids

Originally solicited for November '92, the *To Hell and Back Again* sourcepack features Dante's Hell, the Land of Faerie, Atlantis and many other legendary places. Like *Demons*, this product contains game master and player aids that make pre-existing and soon-to-be-realized campaigns pulse with adventure.

Retails for $20 and will ship in January.

TSR News

Call for Events

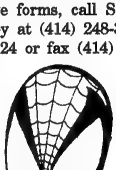
The GEN CON Game Fair is the largest game fair in the country. It features four days of nonstop gaming, drawing thousands of gamers from over a dozen different countries. It is also one of the longest-running conventions of the U.S., celebrating its 26th year in 1993.

The success of the convention depends on hundreds of volunteers who create and run game events throughout the convention. The 1993 Game Fair Committee announces it is now accepting event proposals for the August 19-22, 1993 show! Show organizers are looking for a wider variety of events than ever before!

"We need exciting miniatures, role-playing, strategy board game, and electronic gaming events," says Tom McLaughlin, convention manager. "They can fall into any category including fantasy, science fiction, strategy, military, super hero, comedy, and family entertainment. We also need exciting seminars, workshops and demonstrations."

It's easy to become a judge, and there are many benefits, explains McLaughlin, including FREE admission if they are an accredited member. The show management also gives $1 for every player at each event to judges after the show. "This is the most exciting game fair in the country, and it will be our biggest show ever," adds McLaughlin. "Early Bird" registrants are over 75% higher than last year. Over 20,000 players are expected to attend the 1993 show.

To become a judge, submit an official Event Proposal Form by February 1st, 1993 to: GEN CON Game Fair, P.O.Box 756, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, 53147 USA. To receive forms, call Sandy Kinney at (414) 248-3625, ext. 424 or fax (414) 248-0389.



Happy 30th, Spidey!

In honor of Spider-Man's 30th anniversary, *Webs: The Spider-Man Dossier* is the first *Marvel Super Heroes* game accessory featuring everyone's favorite webslinger. Spider-Man has, of course, been one of Marvel's most popular characters for decades and now you can learn more about the man behind the red mask. *Webs* includes everything needed to incorporate Spidey, his friends, and his foes into your campaign!

The 32-page *Watcher's Chronicle* is filled with history and observations on his career. Everyone form Captain America to the Punisher has something to say about ol' web-head. Even jolly J. Jonah Jameson gets in his two cents worth. You'll also read excerpst from Peter Parker's never-before-seen-journal. Complete with classic and modern Spider-Man art, this book is the ultimate reference to Spidey' life and times.

Webs continues with a 64-page *Grandmaster Log*, narrated by the blue-skinned, cosmic gamesman himself. Loaded with game information and statistics, this book is vital to Game Masters who want to add Spidey to their campaigns. Also included is an adventure for the arachnid adventurer or for your own heroes in an all-new timeline format. See how your heroes fare against the web-slinger's most powerful and dangerous foes. A two-sided mapsheet and six pages of 3-D character fold-ups complete this sourcebox. Don't miss out on this special commemoration of Spidey's 30th!

White Wolf News

Humanoid wolfpacks - along with their furry, four-legged protectors - square off against the ever-present environmental despoilers in White Wolf's *Ways of the Wolf*. This sourcebook, dedicated to the Lupus-Garou (werewolves born from feral/ wolven stock), includes information on wolf behavior, hints for playing a feral wolf, sample characters, and other pertinent gaming details. Gaming fans who devoured *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* (making it one of the year's biggest gaming hits) should respond to *Ways of the Wolf* in like kind.

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A Little Something

by Joe Martin

TSR's gods are concerned. Y'see, I was travelling through the ethereal planes in my disincorporated form just to get a breath of fresh air. It was pleasant. I didn't run into anything - no Beholders, no Astral Soulsuckers - just a good time, floating along, relaxing, taking in the sights. Just as I was ready to return, I spotted a little something. Actually, it was a huge folded sheet of parchment laying on the surface of a hanging off-color moon so, like any curious spirit-form, I decided to investigate. The following is what I found, scribed in elegant longhand with radiant gold ink, and it concerned me. It concerned me enough that I shall share it with you...

The Immortal Asterius
City of Pandius
24th Klarmont, A.C. 1006

My friend and colleague:

The news we heard was true! It seems that somehow word was leaked out, and the mortals now have a way of learning all our secrets. I refer of course to the boxed compendium of lore called ***Wrath of the Immortals****. I have not seen this yet, but I am reliably informed that it contains two books of things mortals are not meant to know, as well as updated maps of the entire Known World.*

The first book, ***Codex of the Immortals****, lists all the important Immortals in the D&D game - including you and me! And it tells our likes and dislikes, enemies and allies, areas of interest, and followers' alignments, as well as personal details, such as our intelligence scores, hit points, and powers.*

The Codex also tells all about the special spells that only we Immortals can use and explains how we manipulate mortal adventurers through our plots. It describes planes and dimensions inhabited by strange creatures most mortals have never even heard of, and reveals how artifacts are made and how they work. It even tells mortals how they can become Immortals and join our ranks! I predict that if many mortals buy and read this book, before long there will be a lot of new Immortal adventurers exploring the multiverse.

If all this were not enough, the second book, ***The Immortals' Fury****, is an epic adventure set against the terrible war now raging between Giantri, Thyatis, and mighty Alphatia; it tells of adventurers trying to discover the role we Immortals play in this great disaster. Were mortals to read this, they might learn more than we know about what we and our enemies have been up to! Hmmm... Where can I find a copy...?*

The Immortal Rad

continued next page...

A Little Something

I'm wagering that you can now understand my concern. The Immortals are not only aware that we're starting to figure them out, they want to buy copies to figure each other out! I'm talking Cosmic Carnage, if you know what I'm saying. I'm talking Megaversal Armageddon, all-out destruction, mayhem out the kahuna... I'm sure you get the gist. Anyway, if they all start finding out - you know, this Rad guy could be somewhere shooting his mouth off right now - then we could be in trouble major! The way I see it, we should all go out and buy the *Wrath of the Immortals* boxed set right away. If we can learn to become gods before they all get wise to us, we'll sneak up on 'em and POW! Alright! Sounds like a plan! Meet me in two hours at the Edificant Library, twelfth floor, and we'll go from there. Cool. See ya'!

Rad's letter was borrowed from *Game World*, TSR's Fall 1992 edition.

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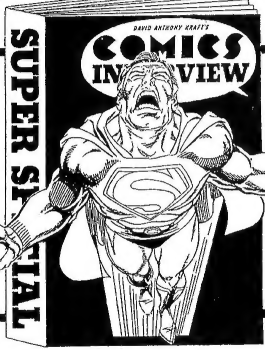

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